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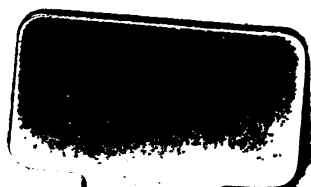
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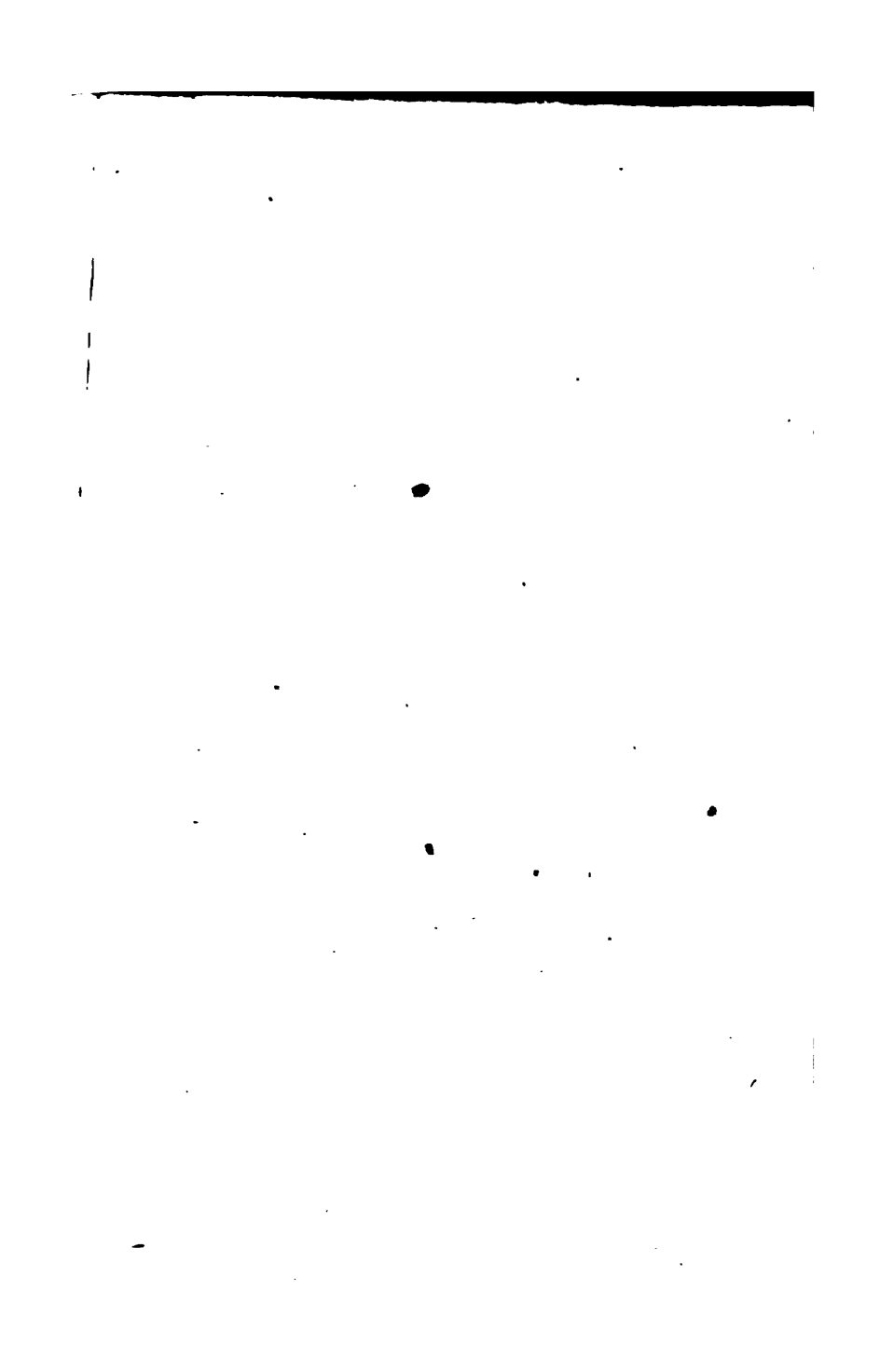
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Vol. XIV.

BIOGRAPHY
OF THE
EARLY CHURCH.

BY THE
REV. ROBERT WILSON EVANS, M.A.
AUTHOR OF THE "RECTORY OF VALEREAD."



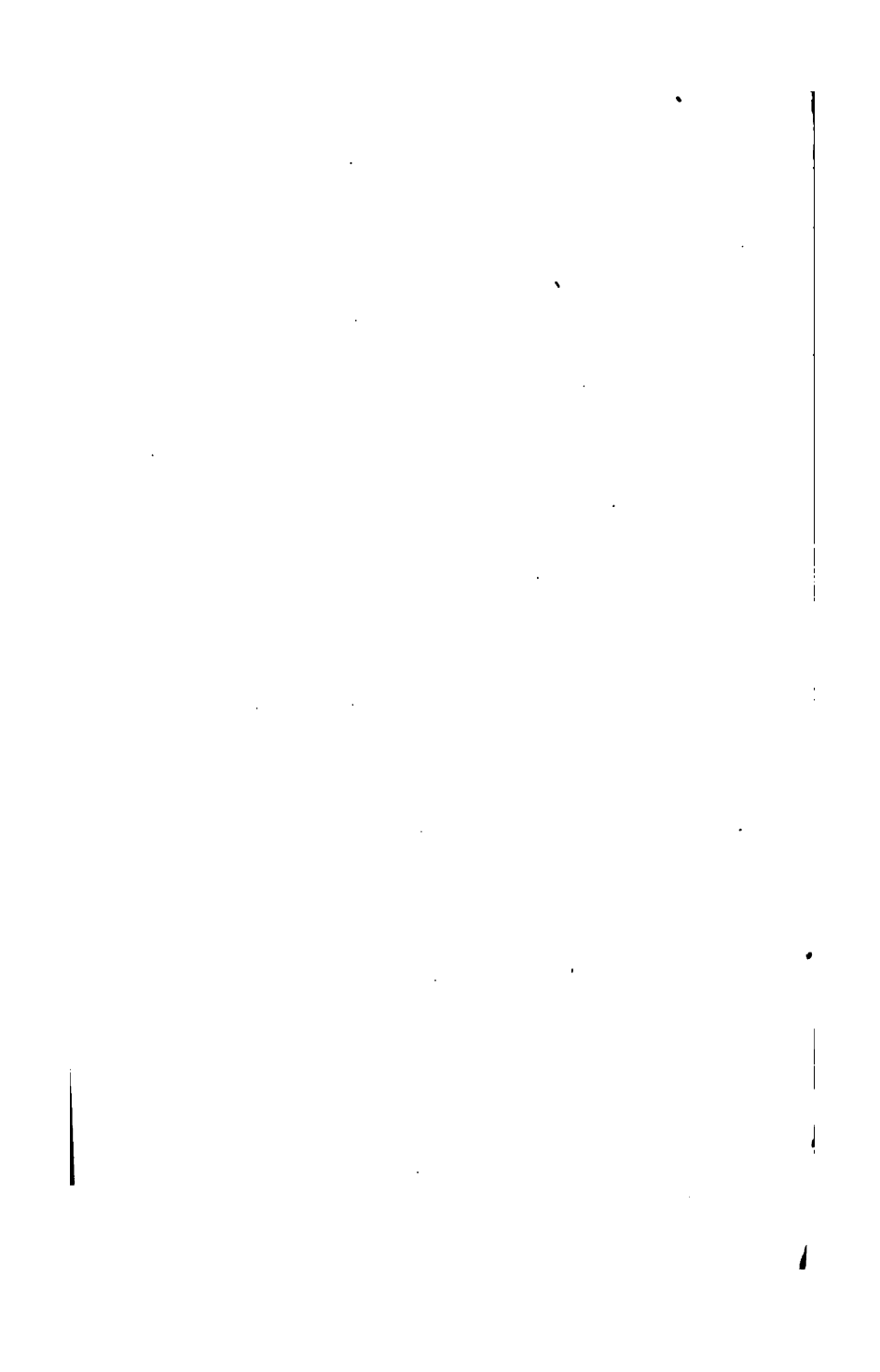
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OF THE
EARLY CHURCH.

BY THE
REV. ROBERT WILSON EVANS, M.A.
FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE;
VICAR OF TARVIN, AND
DOMESTIC CHAPLAIN TO THE BISHOP OF LICHFIELD AND COVENTRY.

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PREFACE.

AMONG the principles which have determined the selection of the following Lives, has been that of preserving the continuity of the history of the Church ; so that this volume may contain an account of all the important facts of the two first centuries, and of the earlier part of the third.

When the nature of the materials is taken into account, this will appear to be the only way by which early ecclesiastical history can be made either instructive or interesting to the general reader, who thus, instead of being introduced to a dry skeleton of ill-connected facts, is set down at once amid the times, by means of the characters which influenced them. Every thing thus becomes definite, and an escape is afforded from that dry generality and vagueness which cannot but pervade every regular

history of the period, and cause it to gain but a slight hold either on the feelings or the memory.

For the usefulness of such a work, it seemed necessary to append references to the sources whence the facts have been drawn. These, therefore, have been carefully registered, and no fact, it is hoped, will be found without a clue to the authority on which it has been admitted. The correction of any error lies thus within the reach of such as choose to seek it.

The limits of a single volume were too narrow to include the deeply interesting Lives of Cyprian and Origen. They, however, appropriately commence a new division of Church History: and should this specimen meet with public approbation, and should it also please God to continue the Author's health, he will devote such little leisure as he can now obtain to a continuation of this work in another volume, which will conclude with the period of the Council of Nice.

Tarvin Vicarage,
Nov. 29, 1836.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	1
CLEMENT OF ROME	15
SYMEON	34
IGNATIUS	52
POLYCARP	72
MARCION	93
JUSTIN MARTYR.....	122
TATIAN	161
DIONYSIUS OF CORINTH	184
HEGESIPPUS.....	199
IRENÆUS	212
VICTOR.....	250
APOLLONIUS	270
CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA	285
TERTULLIAN	325
ALEXANDER OF JERUSALEM.....	368
CONCLUSION	387



BIOGRAPHY

OF THE

EARLY CHURCH.

INTRODUCTION.

*Singularity of the transition from Scripture to the Fathers—
Requisites for the Study of the Fathers—Neglect of this
Study—Peculiar excellence of such Biography, especially
the earlier—Its difficulties—Method of Selection followed in
this Work—Advantages of the Study.*

IN every department of the history of the objects of human study, there is some critical point at which the mind of the reader is suddenly struck with the novel view presented to it, and pushes forward with that impatient interest which is excited by the first apprehension of the unravelling of a well-constructed plot in a play or story. What a scene for instance is opened at once to him who investigates the history of moral philosophy, when he bursts upon the period when Socrates changed the whole aim of Greek research by calling it down from airy speculations on the nature of the Deity to substantial considerations on the duties of man! Or to him, who in the prosecution of the history of natural

philosophy, places his foot at once out of the quagmire of isolated facts and slippery conjectures, upon the solid ground of the single pervading principle established by Newton! How suddenly and deeply are we affected when in the series of the Greek writers of history, we enter in Polybius on the affairs of Rome, or meet, in Anna Comnena, with the chieftains and achievements of modern Europe. And in tracing the history of the kingdoms of this world, what long and engaging prospects open to our eyes at those critical points which determine the seat of empire as it is gradually shifted from East to West. But in all these cases, important though they be, the range of view is confined, the excitement of interest is moderate, compared with what we see and feel in following the several events which have befallen the kingdom of Christ, since its era commenced on the day of Pentecost. The extinction of the dominion of the Gospel amid the ancient civilisation of the East, its erection amid the barbarism of the West, and its translation thence into a new world, which had never been contemplated by its Apostolic founders, are facts of that magnitude and interest, which throw all revolutions of science or of empire into the shade, and could only attend a system, which, sustained by the truth and power of God, was appointed to prevail through all time, and finally in all place.

But, besides these prominent points, are many others which though less obvious, are not less important. Such is that at which supernatural guidance was withdrawn from the administration of the Church, and inspiration from her writings, and

the visible leading-strings of heaven having been removed, she was left to her own exertions as capable of making her way amid the new world in which she was now settled. Awful, indeed, is the interest with which the reflecting reader passes from the last writer of the New Testament to the earliest of the Fathers; and on the point of quitting with one foot, as it were, the Epistles of St. John, comes down with the other upon that of the Roman Clement. Men have so bestridden in the body, the boundary-mark of Europe and Asia, and reflected, as they passed, upon the contrast of the fortunes and characters of these two quarters of the globe. But inferior, as body to mind, is the subject-matter of the reflections of these travellers. That reader passes from the blessed company that heard, and saw, and touched the Lord of life, from those to whom he gave in person his commission to preach his word to every creature, from those whom he endowed with miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost for that purpose, on whose written record and doctrine therefore he can securely rely, in whose authority lies the last appeal of Christian controversy, and whose lives and writings exhibit in lively characters the conversation which they once enjoyed with Christ in the flesh, and their sure and certain hope of rejoining him in a glorified body.—From such he passes at one step to those, who, with the exception of the privilege of having been the disciples of such men, and enjoying occasionally more than ordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, (which privilege, however, extends but to the first two or three) are like to ourselves. He comes to the

infirmities of human understanding, to the frailty of imperfectly evangelized temper. The overflowing charity of John, the mingled sweetness and dignity of Paul, too soon meet their counterpart in the moroseness and harsh invective of Tertullian, in the insolent bearing of Victor; and for the steady and commanding simplicity of Divine Truth, he is presented with the tortuous or unstable deductions of unassisted, if not erring, human reason. In short he may enter upon this new field with much of the feelings of Adam when he quitted paradise, and entered upon the wide earth; and if the ground be not cursed, yet is it, comparatively speaking, unblest. Far from plucking from the tree of life in all security, and gathering his fruit in leisurely gladness, he has now to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow, painfully to select wholesome from amid noxious, and to pass over much ground for but little store. Legitimate types are to be adopted from a heap of fanciful allegory, good reasons from a tissue of loose argument, and credible facts from much careless assertion. His industry, his judgment, his charity, are kept in perpetual exercise.

But it is the very contrast (here so briefly stated) that makes the exploration of this region so instructive; and the apprehension of this contrast must be obtained before he ventured upon the enterprise, and be maintained throughout his research. Few and unimportant would have been the lessons which Adam derived from the niggardly soil, had he not cherished fresh in memory the blissful abundance of paradise. But thus furnished he met with an instructive monitor at every step and in every act.

So must it be with him who enters upon the field of the writings and lives of the Fathers. He must be first of all well imbued with the knowledge and spirit of Scripture, so that he may come to them with a good knowledge of his own heart, with an enlarged acquaintance with human nature, with a judgment and feeling well schooled to discern human from divine, with his views of moral excellence most lofty, and at the same time with a meek and charitable spirit of consideration for the most frail of his fellow-servants. Thus only will he be able to separate the wheat from the chaff and tares, which must needs be mingled with the very purest production of uninspired human knowledge, and thus only will he rightly apprehend the several parts of the body of ecclesiastical literature, by having well studied the head upon which all its life and intelligence depends. One, indeed, can never be thoroughly understood without the other; and if the motions of the body are to be accounted for from the head, so are the thoughts of the head illustrated by the position or gestures of the body. Carrying therefore a perfect acquaintance with the written word into his investigation of this field, he will reap an abundant harvest of instruction. He will there descry the effects of the causes which he has been studying, he will descend to the historical application of the doctrine which he has been imbibing, he will follow into their consequences events of which he had there seen but the starting point, and will trace the development of allusions, and the fulfilment of prophecy.

The study of this field has been too much and

too long depreciated, and by many has been regarded with a look of jealousy as if it were a rival to that of Scripture, and not a minister to it. Yet surely the more excellent the ministration the more should the minister be had in honour, and if the ministry of the letters by which we read, and of the pulses of the air by which we hear the divine word be not despised, the commentary upon its spirit which is afforded by the writings and lives of holy and learned men, who spoke the same language, were familiar with the same manners, lived almost in the same age, cannot but be highly appreciated; especially when we consider that the great majority of readers of Scripture are compelled either by want of learning, or deficiency of comprehension, or by both, to read it with an eye constantly and servilely directed upon some uninspired guide. Why then should they grudge to others the use of these guides, whose testimony is the only legitimate and therefore safe guide? These venerable teachers have been most rudely assailed from two opposite quarters. One party, which has read Scripture under a timid submission to modern theology, and has therefore used it but as the text-book to the positions of some particular system, has charged them with laxity of doctrine, because they do not deliver themselves in the set terms to which the scrutiny and strict definitions of succeeding controversies have now compelled us; or, it may be, even because they do not find in them the identical phraseology which themselves have been in the habit of connecting with religious feeling. Another, again, which has read Scripture with no great

deference to any authority whatever, seated in the easy chair of the luxurious indulgence of a vain, a petulant, and a superficial age, has endeavoured to throw ridicule both on the words, the thoughts, and the deeds of these men, all of whom suffered shameful injustice, and many laid down their lives for the sake of the name of Christ¹. The notes of the trumpet of defamation thus blown, have been eagerly caught up by the great multitude that is always glad of a shadow of reason to despise what is too difficult for its indolence, or too excellent for its attainment, and a general sentence of condemnation had consigned these valuable authors to the dusty shelves of neglect, until the late revival of a better spirit and deeper knowledge.

To such views the right reading of Scripture can never lead. He who has studied well that volume will not take up captious objections to the opinions of men, some of whom conversed with the apostles in person, others with their disciples, and others were familiar with a tradition which as yet was full and incorrupt. Nor will he who has weighed the characters of Peter, Paul, and John, be niggardly in his veneration for such men as Ignatius, Polycarp, and Justin Martyr, men who, after a life of incessant labour in the Lord, were witnesses to his truth in that particular sense of the word, which is denoted by the term Martyr. Will he charge with carnal

¹ The spirit of Jortin's Remarks on Ecclesiastical History cannot be too severely condemned. The flippancy and heartless sneer of Voltaire ill accord with the character of a Christian divine, and the unfeeling banter of Gibbon should not have found a precedent in the work of a Boylian lecturer.

bigotry, or with erroneous doctrine, those teachers who bore the brunt of the conversion of the world to Christ? those who hungered, and thirsted, and watched, that he might be filled and sleep? Will he withhold a filial reverence from these Fathers of the Church into which he has so blissfully succeeded? Assuredly he will acknowledge that the disciples of the Apostles were worthy of their masters, and that the disciples of those disciples did not do discredit to their instructors.

And now to come to that particular department of this region, which is taken up in the following pages, in sequence to the Biography of Scripture, little need be said beyond what has been stated in the Introduction to that work, of its richness in interest and instruction. It comprehends the lives and characters of men who lived in the most remarkable period of the Church of God. The divine Angel of his covenant had led his followers through the sea of baptism, and now they were encountering the various perils and afflictions of the wilderness of the unbelieving world. But they murmured not like Israel. They had not received the circumcision of the flesh, but that of the Spirit. No repining after abandoned delights, no cowardly falling away from the requisitions of God's will, no ungrateful and impotent rebellions against his guidance, meet us in this chosen people. And, contrasted as their conduct is with that of Israel, it is not less so with that of the world. It is not the history of a number of individuals of a certain class, such as may be termed Lives of Philosophers, Lives of Leaders. Not such are the lives of the Saints or Fathers. Each philo-

sopher had his system whereby to attract this world, each leader his tactics whereby to win it. But these, if they died not with them, only lingered through a school of a few successors, continually losing their peculiarity, and mingling with new principles. But these men, in uninterrupted succession, opposed one invariable system (and invariable because true,) in gallant fight to the world. This it is which renders so interesting and instructive their difference of character and position. We see the grand pervading principle of the cross of Christ worked out in manifold ways, and understand its bearings the better for the variety and multitude of examples. We see it here conflicting with the religion of the country, here condemned by the policy of the government, here braving the passions of the multitude, here confronting the dogmas of the learned. It is here committed by the Lord to the hands of the plain, unlettered man; here to him who has mastered all the lore of the day; here to the accomplished rhetorician; here to the rude soldier; here to the eminent bishop, and here to the humble deacon. Here it is upheld by the meek, here by the high-spirited, here by the forward to dare, here by the resigned to suffer.

But, invariable though the system be in itself, it may be adhered to with greater or less faithfulness. It is, therefore, to the earlier period of the Church that we must look for the most perfect examples of its operation. Then it was in open conflict with the world, and its upholders had not yet been taken captive by their captive, as Israel by the seductions of the Canaanites. It was then so unworldly as to provoke the joint assault of all the ministers of the

world, of king, priest, and philosopher. Hence the biography of the three first centuries is much more instructive than that of the following, however inferior in interest. As we approach later times we begin to lose sight of the working of the pure principle; and the powers of the world have slackened their resistance. We come to much of the ordinary biography of the world, and if we find a bishop opposed to Cæsar, it is too often either on some worldly-minded principle, or on some worldly-minded perversion of the pure principle. Spiritual pride, lust of power, secular vanity, and the like, furnish the materials of most interesting narratives, and may admonish, but they cannot guide us, nor elevate our minds, nor cleanse and mollify our affections, like the histories of the worthies of former periods.

With all these advantages, however, in point of form, the biography of the early Church labours under serious difficulties in point of materials. The documents of the period are very scanty. Scarcely one of its writers can be called voluminous, and of the great majority of such as are extant in their own words, we have but fragments. The only remaining authorities, which can at all be used with confidence, are the genuine Acts of the Martyrs, which exceed not one or two, and the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius. To this last work we are chiefly indebted even for those fragments, and this noble pile stands as a Westminster Abbey in the region of sacred literature, crowded with the remains of the worthies of former days. How are we filled with deep and interesting reflection, how affected with dutiful reverence for the memory of these our spiritual forefathers, as

we expatiate through it. Sometimes a whole cluster of thought will gather round some unobtrusive fact, and a few words will carry our imagination into lively scenes of those days. Later authors supply useful subsidiary information, but no fact should be insisted upon, nor any weighty inference drawn, where they are the sole authority. But even with all the collateral aid that can be procured, many disputable points remain. Any formal discussion of these would be foreign to the nature of this work, nor do they very much concern its purpose, since they are mostly chronological, and therefore seldom affect the reflections to which the facts give rise. Where the exact order of time is important, there the author has been content with giving the result of what appeared to him the best arrangement; not without a warning to the reader in the notes. But no undue stress (it is hoped) has been laid wherever there seemed such insecurity of foundation.

It may perhaps be objected, that in some cases the number of pages assigned to a character is out of all proportion to the quantity of materials on which it is built, and the lives of Symeon and Victor, of each of which scarcely more than a single event is known, may be cited as examples. But the main purpose of this work has much more to do with the quality than the quantity of facts, and with their selection than collection. In one case the materials may be but a body of dull common-place events, which may have befallen any one at any period. In another, they may be but two or three, but yet of such a nature, with regard to the crisis of the time,

and some peculiar trait of character in the person, as immediately to kindle the imagination, set the thoughts to work, and lay hold of the affections. It is, indeed, a delightful reward for the toil and irksomeness of investigation, when, amid the crowd of events, we meet a character to whom, as to a centre, we can refer them in our mind; when we thus find one before whom we can be sure they did not pass without keen observation, as well as intimate experience. Our imagination then endeavours to enter into the very inward chamber of his mind, so as to see with his eyes, and to feel with his heart. We are thus stimulated to extend and deepen our knowledge, and, if the view which our imagination gives at best be not accurate, we are at all events not gazing on confusion. Often, too, it will happen, that a character, insignificant in itself, is intimately associated with several others which are highly interesting, yet, as being known to us only as engaging in the same events, cannot be considered separately from each other; or from their parity, or other circumstances, cannot be referred to one of themselves as a centre. A convenient centre is then found in this character. Again, in the history of opinions—of the heresies for instance—we may know nothing beyond the names of their chief authors and upholders, except a few facts told of one of them. He thus enters the list of biography, and, becoming the representative of all the rest, demands for more than his own share of remark. Besides all this, it may be observed, that some notions and facts have such a relation to a large cluster in a man's mind, both of natural and acquired thought, that they draw it all

forth, and a profusion of observation is poured out upon a subject, which, to another mind, equally well furnished, or perhaps much better, appears most unpromising and barren.

It is not only delightful, but instructive, to be taken out of the beaten track of daily life ; and on this account, the long neglect shown to the biography of the ancient church is much to be regretted. Our views have been narrow, our standard low. The biography of our own times is comparatively but the tale of one of our village, which presents us with familiar occurrences, with common-place situations, and however useful in illustrating what we already know, informs us of little indeed which we do not know. We look at the Church as through a loophole, which ever presents the same confined view. But the biography of ancient times admits us at once to the whole view, to the mighty tumult of the main ocean of events of which we before saw but the few last waves dying quietly against the shore. It is the tale of a character the influence of which has pervaded the whole Church, the history of which opens new and commanding views, new and instructive varieties of the Christian's situation. As the chemist finds out each component element of a mineral, by subjecting it to numerous and various tests, so do we detect the principles of the human heart by a similar experience of its condition under novel and diversified circumstances. At the same time the breadth of view presented, and the imposing figure which the characters exhibit, being stripped by time of all mean and vulgar detail of daily life, and seen but

in their bold outlines, while they sharpen our moral discernment, create also a loftiness of feeling.

But a much better estimate will be formed upon this and other points, when the lives of the fathers shall have past in review. The concluding chapter, therefore, will resume, and carry on the train of observations here entered upon.

CLEMENT OF ROME.

Peculiarity of the situation of the Apostolic Fathers—Clement elected Bishop of Rome—Difficulties and advantages of his situation—Persecution under Domitian—Application of the Church of Corinth—State of that Church—Letter of the Church of Rome, written to it through Clement—Short analysis of it—Its happy results—Continual vexation of the Church—Death of Clement.

THE threshold of ecclesiastical biography is a situation of moving interest to the mind, which will pause awhile to survey the scene presented to it, and converse with the persons that immediately encounter it. These latter are the immediate disciples and companions of the Apostles, who now stand alone, without the aid and countenance of superiors, in the high places of the Church to which they had been ordained. Theirs was no common charge, they were no common men, nor could they have earned their honourable commission by common services of wisdom and piety. As referred to their predecessors, they appear to us like younger brothers, who, being destitute of the privileges and wealth entailed upon the elder, are left to make their way in the world

as well as they can. As referred to their cotemporaries, they are the flower of their generation, exceeding all in their beauty of holiness and odour of sanctity. As compared to their successors, they come before us with all the majestic attributes of founders of families, and more especially excite our imagination and feelings where the Churches, at whose foundations they laboured, are still seen towering with their walls and pinnacles. Ephesus has long ago vanished, and carried away with it much matter for reflection, which we might have pleasingly associated with our thoughts on Timothy. But Rome still survives, and her long series of eventful history leads us up to Clement in a frame of mind so affected as to regard him with looks of much greater interest than the few recorded facts of his life are capable of supplying.

Clement was a fellow-worker with St. Paul in the Gospel of Christ, and the Church of Philippi¹, among others, was the scene of those services which were ultimately to be transferred with such benefit of experience to Rome. Sweet must have been the recollections of this noviciate when he looked back to it from his chair of anxious presidency in the capital, and revived the memory of companions and equals, amid the solitude of his awfully responsible dignity. But the thick veil which obscures the history of the early Church, and particularly envelops that of the origin of the Church of Rome in uncertainty, so that in some degree it shares the darkness which enwraps the foundation of the city,

¹ Philipp. iv. 3. Euseb. H. E. iii. 15. Jerome's Catalogue.

hides from our sight all the facts which intervene between his sojourn in Philippi, and his episcopate at Rome. We can only infer the course of unblemished life and unwearied exertion by which he won the suffrages of the brethren, who deemed him not unworthy of presiding in a Church where the words and the works of two Apostles were still fresh in memory. About three and twenty years had elapsed since their martyrdom; and two bishops, Linus and Anencletus, had successively discharged the pastoral office, when Clement was summoned to its ministration.

(A.D. 92.) Thus he succeeded to a charge of which we can but faintly estimate the exceeding weight. As a companion of Apostles, he would be looked up to with reverence, and his authority would be appealed to, as of one whose information was drawn from the fountain-head¹, "having their preaching still sounding in his ears, and their traditions before his eyes²." But as not being an Apostle, he would have to contend with rebellious spirits, who had perhaps reluctantly submitted even to inspired guidance, and were unlikely not to take advantage of the removal of the constraint of men ordained of God, and to resist the superiority of men ordained of man. There was war in heaven, and the Church even in its infantine purity was not exempted from the lot of its prototype. Hence the charge of these uninspired

¹ See the frequent reference which Irenæus makes to the testimony of men who were in the same succession with Clement. The passages are brought together in Dr. Routh's *Reliquiæ Sacræ*, vol. i.

² Iren. c. Hær. iii. 3.

guides was most difficult, and the period of their presidency was a critical time for the Church. They were obliged to be watchful against offences, even more than an Apostle himself, and had to win by painful struggles that influence and authority with which the Apostle had begun. We may gather some notion of their difficult situation, from the earnestness with which St. Paul urges Timothy and Titus, and from the character which he draws of the persons who were likely to dispute their authority. So Clement had to be an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity, and to give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine¹, in all things showing himself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that he who was of the contrary part might be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of him². The days had already come when men should be lovers of themselves, blasphemers, despisers of those that are good, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof³; and if Simon Magus had withstood Peter at Rome, there would not be wanting some of his heretical progeny to contend with Clement on the same ground.

But, in despite of all difficulties, the views presented to Clement must have been full of brightness. The kingdom of his Master had given unequivocal signs that it could not be shaken by any powers of earth. The Gentile world had made its first open and ineffectual attack under Nero, and, in the space of

¹ 1 Tim. iv. 12, 13.

² Tit. ii. 7, 8.

³ 2 Tim. iii. 2.

three years after, he had stood with his brethren of a purified and rejoicing Church, and gazed on the triumphal procession of Vespasian and Titus, as they conveyed to the Capitol the sacred spoils of the Temple of Jerusalem. One great enemy of the faith had extinguished the other, and henceforward the struggle was with a single adversary, from whose first assault the Church had risen with redoubled strength, while he was daily disclosing symptoms of increasing weakness. His temples abandoned to ruin¹; his gods ridiculed upon the stage, and served at their altars with the vilest refuse of his flocks and herds²; his sages allowed to laugh with impunity at all his institutions, religious and political³; his religion finding its most zealous support in the besotted superstition of a profligate populace⁴;—such were among the many signs of decline which the king of this world was exhibiting to the eyes of Clement. He could not but be perpetually reminded of the desperate inequality of the contest where one party could but inflict at intervals a single heavy blow from iron or brass, which affected but the mere external accidents of his opponent, while the other penetrated unceasingly with the sharp sword of spirit into the joints and marrow, heart and

¹ Horace, *Od.* iii. 6. 3.

² Tertull. *Apol.* 13. 15.

³ Tertull. *ad Nation.* i. 4. *Apol.* 46.

⁴ See curious instances of the minute detail of domestic and public life which Roman superstition subjected to various deities, in Tertull. *ad Nation.* ii. 11. Augustin. *Civ. Dei.* ii. 16. 21. 23, 24. A large number of these are now, in the same country, put under the inspection of Christian saints. Whatever be the creed, superstition is always the same.

head. So Clement went on the way of his ministry rejoicing.

(A.D. 94.) He had however proceeded but a few steps upon his course before the severity of the times called upon him distinctly, as shepherd, to be ready to lay down his life for the flock. Such a call would be readily heard and cheerfully obeyed by one who had ministered to Paul, and had, probably, been an eye-witness when he received, together with Peter, the crown of martyrdom in the last persecution. Domitian, a close and worthy imitator of Nero, now imitated him in stretching forth his hands to vex the Church¹. Unreclaimed by the fall of their Temple, the Jews were still in continual expectation of the coming of their Christ, whose name they vociferated through the empire amid seditious tumult. Alarmed at the rumour of this approaching competitor, the tyrant naturally exercised his rage against those who were called after his name, and the Christian was involved in the crime of the Jew. The same peculiar situation which in later days proved so favourable to the acquisition and exertion of power, was in earlier times one of superior danger and suffering to the Church of Rome. In the capital of the Roman world, under the immediate eye of Cæsar and his government, she received the first and heaviest strokes of his scourge, and her bishops won by suffering that reverence which their successors exacted by threats. The false and horrible charges, which had been invented against the Christians in the former persecution, were now revived²; and as Domitian never

¹ In the 15th year of his reign, Euseb. E. H. iii. 18.

² See Melito, as quoted by Euseb. H. E. iv. 26.

forgot his interests in his cruelties, and made his revenge minister to his rapacity, the Christian name became doubly odious at Rome, by supplying a convenient subject for capital charge against any one whose person was obnoxious or property desirable. Held in terror over their heads by the band of informers, how could it not be regarded with extreme repulsion by all who knew not the real principles of its owners, and what was too shocking to be believed of a society, when the imputation of membership might at any moment plunge them in the dungeon? As head of so calumniated a body, Clement must have been severely tried. To confirm the wavering, to cheer the despondent, to prepare the martyr for his suffering, to administer comfort to his bereaved friends; to combat the expostulations of those who wished to drop some badge of their profession, the importance of which they thought light compared with the danger to which it exposed them, or to adopt the screen of some observance which they were unwilling to consider sinful under such pressing necessity; to calm the terrors of the weaker brethren, and, amid this distraction of the crew, to direct, like a good helmsman, a steady look-out upon the course of the labouring vessel,—these were the cares of Clement during this perilous storm. He brought the Church safe through it, himself unhurt, and with not many of his companions, perhaps, lost either to this world or to the next. The Bishop of Rome, indeed, had neither silver nor gold wherewith to invite the assault of rapacity, but we may reasonably collect that the sword and exile carried off the richest and rarest of his flock, and among them, perhaps, one or

two of the most noble of Roman rank¹. But the loss of such fatlings of his flock was amply compensated by the superior spiritual health and condition which was acquired by the numerous remainder.

The relaxation of the violence of this persecution recalled the attention of Clement and his Church to an application which it had compelled them for a time to neglect², and low as the Church of Rome now seemed to the eyes of the world, never since, perhaps, has she stood so high in the eyes of her divine Head, nor has she ever since been regarded with greater deference and respect by her sisters. At the very moment that her bishop was glad to pass unknown and unobserved through the streets of that city, of which his successors are sovereigns, she was extending her hand in aid of a great but distressed Church, and exercising the charitable office of mediation in her distracted body. The Church of Corinth had invoked her assistance to quell those divisions, which, however allayed for the time by Paul, had now been renewed after an interval of about forty years, and with more miserable laceration than ever. There were peculiar circumstances, besides the general one of the high character and influence of the Church in the capital, which directed her appeal to this quarter. An intimacy had existed from the first between the two sisters. They had

¹ Euseb. H. E. iii. 18. Flavius Clement, cousin to the Emperor, whose death is mentioned, with curious remarks, by Suetonius and Dio Cassius, is commonly supposed to have been a Christian. The reasons may be seen in Lardner, vol. vii. p. 270, &c. viii. p. 132, &c.

² See the opening of Clement's Epistle.

been nursed by the same Apostles, Peter and Paul; and some of the first preachers at Corinth, as Aquila with his wife Priscilla¹, had come from Rome. Clement himself too had been among Paul's fellow-workers in Greece, and even if he had never accompanied him to Corinth, yet as he was now probably one among few survivors of the companions of him who had composed their former difference, this would naturally furnish an additional reason for their directing their appeal hither. The deputies arrived just on the eve of the persecution, and must have been much struck with the order and good discipline of Clement's Church, where, as in a ship when a fearful hurricane is coming on, every man was at his post, and no more words past than were necessary; no selfishness of vanity or ambition was visible: all were intent upon the general safety. What a contrast to their own selfish and scandalous quarrels! One of these was Fortunatus, who had been employed formerly, when they gave the account of the distracted state of their Church to the Apostle while he was tarrying in Asia². With him Clement had, probably, formed an acquaintance during his sojourn in Greece, and delightful indeed in such a case must have been this meeting. They would mutually recal to mind the scenes of their former conversation with their martyred Master, and confirm one another with recollections, struck out like sparks from mutual

¹ Acts xviii. 2.

² 1 Cor. xvi. 17. and end of Clement's Epistle. But those who snap asunder on all occasions the connection between Scriptural and Ecclesiastical history will not acknowledge the identity.

collision, of his example and precepts. Clement would the more indulge in the recalling to mind such precious moments, inasmuch as he himself might reasonably expect within a few days to follow the bloody track of the Apostle, and give the last testimony to Christ in the same city. He would, therefore, willingly fortify himself at this trying moment with every lesson which he had received from him; and the recollection of the toils and perils undergone in his company would sweeten the anticipations of the rest to which he looked, in rejoining him and being with Christ. At the same time, the melancholy account which Fortunatus gave of the state of his Church would fill him with anxiety and pain, and yet give him reason to acknowledge God's merciful dealing in sending the present persecution. He might look anxiously back upon his own conduct, to see whether it might not have contributed by some acts of commission or omission to produce in a short time hence the same sad result. With an equally anxious eye he would look to the present. No man can find himself clear from the charge of having in some degree lent his aid to the derangement of the society around him, if he rigorously examine his own bosom. His imperfections and infirmities must have had their results. Looking, therefore, at his awful responsibility as shepherd of the flock, he might in most thankful humility have acknowledged the mercy of God in the commencing persecution, which would cut short all rampant luxuriance of vanity and ambition, quell the growth of insolent faction, and check any ruinous consequences of his own infirmity.

The tale of Fortunatus was indeed sufficient to make every Church and Pastor of a Church tremble. After her recovery from her former distractions, Corinth had enjoyed a season of great spiritual prosperity. Every one who had sojourned there was edified with her discreet discipline, and thankfully proclaimed abroad her bountiful hospitality, so that her name was pronounced in honour and love far and wide. Subjection to spiritual rulers, obedience to parents, meekness of deportment, mutual charity, large and unadulterated Christian knowledge, a zeal in good works, a lively apprehension of Christ's sufferings, a full effusion of the Holy Spirit, earnest and continual prayer, singleness and purity of heart, forgetfulness of injuries, unwearied charity—these had been the happy bonds of her society¹. But, alas! from all this brightness of purity she returned to wallow in the mire. And we see herein a melancholy proof of the superiority of our powers for evil much more than for good, and the strangely infectious influence of bad example on our corrupt nature. This total change was wrought by the headlong wilfulness of but a few persons. Their small number, perhaps, had not created alarm: their audacity had gradually grown as the community gradually became accustomed to it; and it was unfortunately allowed to become accustomed to it, either by the timidity or folly of their rulers, who lingered in checking it until it should become more overt, and when it had reached this point, were either overawed by the ascendancy which the factious had gained among the numbers of weak,

¹ Clement. Ep. Cor. 1, 2.

indifferent, or hypocritical brethren, or else thought proper to leave it to the condemnation of public opinion. Justly and miserably were they disappointed, if the latter step was their policy, since they might have known that public opinion will be gradually corrupted, wherever the evil conduct or sentiments of men, however few, are suffered to go unchecked. When therefore the point which they, in their cautious lenity, had set down for the time of condemnation, and consequent extinction, had arrived, they would find themselves almost alone as severe judges, if not as disapprovers. It is with churches as with nations—their prosperity sows the seeds of their ruin. And the large enjoyment of excellent gifts and blessings by the Church of Corinth was too much (as heretofore) for the weakness of some of its members. “They waxed fat and kicked¹.” Hence sprang dissent, with all its accompanying evils. Those in no honour rose against those in honour; those of no reputation against those of reputation; the unwise against the wise; the younger against the elder, even to mutual persecution. The fear of God was abandoned, the rule of life in Christ was forsaken, and each one, amid envying and strife, walked according to his own wicked desires².

A.D. 96. If any leaven of such uncharitableness were now fermenting in the Church of Rome, this awful example, glaring upon them on the gloomy eve of persecution, would surely reclaim all her

¹ Deut. xxxii. 15., applied to them by Clement himself, in c. 3.

² Ib. and 45.

restive members, and Clement would have the satisfaction of encountering the storm with his vessel in the best trim, and his crew in the best spirits. It was mercifully provided for Corinth, that Rome should have undergone this trial before she admonished her sister. Evil times make the good better, and the bad worse. The distinction having been thus made broad and clear between the two, the former recognise each other, sink all minor differences, and unite in one compact body, while the latter withdraw in disorder upon their various courses of iniquity. All are now of one mind ; and the same Holy Spirit, which bound them together in their sufferings, administers to the mutual enjoyment of their prosperity. It was in this condition that the Church of Rome, having left her dross behind in the refiner's furnace, and bright in all the purity of fine gold, took upon herself to answer her sister's application. She had now leisure to look beyond her own sufferings, and she empowered Clement to write the reply. Such is the origin of the only genuine work surviving of this Confessor. It is a document of exceeding interest, presenting us at the outset a beautiful picture of primitive times. The Church of Rome, washed anew in the blood of her Saviour, by the blood which she had shed for his name's sake, sober, undefiled, undivided, addresses a sister who was in every way her contrast, revelling in abused prosperity, rioting in spiritual pride, and torn with dissension. Such a sister she could exhort with authority, as having practised what she preached, could rebuke with dignity, as notoriously free from the errors which she blamed, and could

press her advice with every soothing expression of friendship and love, from the affectionate intercourse which had existed between them from the first.

With all the undesigned skilfulness of natural good sense and feeling, Clement, at the commencement of his letter, draws an affecting picture of the former prosperity of the Corinthians, and follows it up with the hideous contrast of their present state. Showing by instances the evil effects of a spirit of envious strife, he exhorts them to repentance, obedience, faith, humility, and charity, enforcing all by a long and bright list of examples. He then demonstrates the necessity of harmony, from the analogy of the subordination of the natural world, with all its operations, to Providence, by which means regularity is insured, and all things are at peace with each other. From practice he proceeds to doctrine, the corruption of which necessarily follows that of practice, and shows by analogy the reasonableness of the resurrection of the body, which (it thus appears) was again disputed. Some also had maintained that works were unnecessary to faith; he shows therefore their necessity. Others, on the contrary, held them justificatory; he shows therefore their intrinsic vanity. Having thence returned to enforce the necessity of subordination, and co-operation of great with small, strong with weak, rich with poor, he proceeds to the duty of obedience to the Apostolic succession, showing how it was ordained for a remedy against schism. He then recommends charity, lauding it in terms similar to those of St. Paul, and having stirred them up with examples of faithful devotion among the Gentiles,

concludes with renewed exhortations to subordination, winding up with a solemn prayer to God, the all-seeing Ruler, the Master of Spirits and Lord of all flesh. The spirit of this letter is remarkably mild and unassuming, and the style unpretending. In reading it we are often reminded of the Epistle to the Hebrews¹.

Great was the reverence paid by the ancient Church to those who had made a good confession of the name of Christ through suffering and imprisonment. Their counsel was sought, as imparted from men who had the wisdom which no man can gainsay or resist; and their prayers were requested, as offered by men who had proved their intimate connection with the great Mediator. Can we wonder then at the powerful effect of this letter of Clement and his Church, fresh as they were from the font of a bold confession, which in a manner supplied that authority which Paul had derived from his Apostolic character? It was accepted and obeyed; and thus, through God's beautiful economy, the same persecution served the double purpose of confirming the Church of Rome and reforming that of Corinth. Nor did the Corinthians lay it by as soon as it had answered its present purpose. Nearly fourscore years afterwards, a bishop of Corinth could inform his brother of Rome, that

¹ This was long ago remarked, Euseb. H. E. iii. 38. But to the supposition of a Hebrew original to that Epistle is opposed the whole cast of the style. The structure of the first four verses (though the language is strongly Hellenistic) makes us stumble on the threshold of such an hypothesis, unless the translation was more free than ancient examples will warrant. Some make Clement the translator, others Luke.

they were in the habit of reading this letter in their Church¹; and about the same period, Hegesippus, during a sojourn at Corinth, was edified and refreshed with its orthodoxy². Long, therefore, did the voice of this blessed peace-maker, speaking even though he was dead, second the voice of his master Paul with its meek exhortation and affectionate deprecation. Henceforward we hear no more of the Corinthian schisms.

The accession of Nerva suppressed the last sparks of this persecution, and Clement presided over a constantly increasing fold. But we are not to suppose that anything more than comparative comfort and security was its lot. The unalloyed enjoyment and liberty of our happy days was unknown to the primitive Christians even at the summit of prosperity; and he who would judge of their condition from that of the breathing-time given to a persecuted sect in a Christian land, would form but a very inadequate idea. This latter is not essentially at variance with the world around in the circumstances of common life. Its members are undistinguished from the mass. But the primitive Christian was placed amidst surrounding idolatry, whose usages crossed him in all the minute detail of daily conversation. Every moment he was discovered, and pointed out for scoffs or ill treatment. Not only did he reveal his profession, when he refused to join parties of friends in the amusements of the circus, or declined the offer of a magistracy, which was alike honourable and suitable to his talents and fortune, or omitted

¹ Euseb. H. E. iv. 23.

² Id. iv. 22.

to put up lights and laurel at his door in honour of Cæsar, but also when in the commonest contract he was required to swear, or was understood to swear, by the name of some heathen god; when, if a carpenter, he refused an application to make an image or some appendage to heathen worship; if, when a smith, he was called upon to gild a statue; if, when a druggist, he refused to sell frankincense for sacrifice; if, when a schoolmaster, he appointed no holidays for the festival of Saturn. In short, every day opened and closed a series of vexations, if not of dangers, and was a period of at least petty persecution¹.

Thus did the world daily worry, and endeavour to outweary the patience of the flock over which Clement presided. Perhaps these obscure and petty attacks were the least tolerable to the young and ardent. The young soldier, under the annoyance of a distant but continual fire, is impatient to rush up to deadly conflict hand to hand. Men prefer the certainty of a greater evil to the protracted uncertainty of a smaller, and they have no satisfaction in suffering to no purpose, and in obscurity. "Let us be slain in broad daylight²," is the natural wish of his heart. Hence, partly, the occasional rashness with which Christians put themselves forward for persecution. They then fixed precisely the point on which the tempter should assail them, and concen-

¹ This enumeration is taken from a list of grievances and stumblingblocks given by Tertullian in his curious and interesting *Treatise de Idololatriâ*.

² *Iliad* xvii. 647.

trated upon it all their sentinels of vigilance. Whereas previously they were assailed, however feebly, on innumerable points, and distracted by the unceasing annoyance. In providing appropriate food for such sheep, Clement would be put to the resources of all his discretion and patience, of all his powers of wise persuasion; and as generals have often found the economy of a time of truce more difficult than that of a time of war, so probably was it with Clement, in his spiritual commandership. His labours were less glorious, but also more difficult. It is easy to exhort against the fear of man, to call forth the spirit of martyrdom, and point out the open and violent attacks of the powers of the world; but it is not so easy to inculcate unflinching patience, and to admonish with effect against petty, obscure, and yet continual assaults. The preacher has then but little help from passionate feeling, and has much more to do with serious, and, comparatively, cold admonition. His hearers too are less disposed to attention on the threshold, and less satisfied when they have entered and heard.

The peaceful administration of Nerva was followed by the accession of Trajan. But, before the treatment of the Christians had undergone any change in the counsels of this Emperor, Clement had breathed his last, in the third year of his reign¹. Thus his death appropriately marked the close of the first century of Christian suffering, and of Christian glory².

¹ Euseb. iii. 34.

² Many other facts are related of Clement, by late and (under the circumstances) not credible writers; and other works are

spuriously ascribed to him. These may be seen in Cove's Apostolici, of which learned, but too uncritical work, the great defect is, that he gives as much space to spurious matter as to genuine, in his narrative; and the occasional expression of his disbelief, while it will not do away the wrong impression thus made in some minds, will provoke incredulity as to the whole body of facts in others.

SYMEON.

*Symeon's family—A Presbyter of the Church at Jerusalem—
Elected Bishop—Siege of Jerusalem, and flight of the Church
to Pella—Return to Jerusalem—Reasons for still retaining the
Law—Latter days and death of Symeon.*

ONE among few glimpses gained of a Church more celebrated than known, and of a preacher, who having been born early enough to share in the general expectation of the coming of Christ, lived long enough both to witness the fulfilment of his prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem, and to see the third generation rise in succession to the Apostles—this combines a number of interesting objects to him who sits down to collect and arrange the scanty documents of the life of Symeon. He is disappointed at finding so slight a record of one who was so nearly connected with the Lord, and held a conspicuous post in his Church. But as the moon will pour from one end of the heaven to the other a light which could not be contributed from the whole host of minute studding stars, so it is with certain historical facts. They shed a brighter and wider light than the whole extent of historical view, starred with less important facts,

could dispense. Two or three such facts combine to render the life of Symeon a theme of clear conception and glorious meditation.

The proudest kings, of the longest and most famous line, might have envied his relationship, and among the few who would be superior to the boast of such a distinction was the possessor : Symeon was son of Clopas, who was brother of Joseph¹. Thus he was reputed cousin-german to the Lord. His mother was Mary, sister of the Virgin². Thus he again stood in the same relation to the Lord. He was in the vigour of ripe manhood³ when the long-expected Saviour revealed himself to the world in one of the members of his own family. Such members are naturally the first or last to believe in lofty pretensions set up by one of their own number. Their familiarity has long reduced him to their own standard ; they are reluctant to part with deeply-rooted habits, opinions, and associations ; they are jealous of the superiority of a former equal, or, it may be, even inferior. But, on the other hand, pride and interest, affection and admiration, may dispose them to engage with eagerness in the assertion of his claims. The brethren of Joseph illustrate the feelings with which any claims to superiority are rejected. In our Lord there were many qualities which would hide his spiritual glory from the carnal and superficial view of his brethren. For instance, his

¹ Euseb. E. H. iii. 11.

² Ib. 32. John xix. 25.

³ Suffering under Trajan at the age of 120. Euseb. E. H. iii. 32. whose whole account of Symeon is given from Hege-sippus.

meekness and sweetness of disposition would be a veil to his transcendent wisdom. Ill temper too frequently passes for talent, from the dogmatism and appearance of decision which it exhibits; and the fear which it impresses emboldens the man to give free scope to such talent as he possesses. Thus it often happens that, with the same quantity of talent, one man shall be deemed to have superior, another but moderate attainments. Alas, that fear should often be so important an element of respect! Had one started up from among the brethren of Jesus with the lurid demoniacal glare of untempered worldly wisdom, his claims would have quite excluded those of him, who shone with the mild tempered light of heavenly wisdom. The heat, which angrily bursts its prison in the volcano, and lays cities desolate, engages our wonder, while we never think of that which, being uniformly and gently tempered through the ground, nourishes the flowers for our subsistence and delight. When to these considerations we add the idea entertained of the carnal dominion of the Christ, we cannot be surprised that Jesus disappointed the expectations even of his own family, and that for some time not even his brethren believed in him¹.

But Symeon overcame all these impediments, and attached himself to Jesus: not, however, that he had as yet risen superior to the ambitious feelings which were entertained in the breasts of all Christ's followers, while as yet the real nature of his kingdom was misunderstood. The whole period of Symeon's life had

¹ Job vii. 5.

been one of lively hope to his nation ; and he could little dream that instead of giving laws to the world, its extinction in the list of nations would be among the first and grandest preparations for the coming of the promised kingdom. In what position he stood as a disciple of our Lord is not known. He might have been one of the seventy, since we may reasonably suppose that his Master, who intended to place him hereafter in so conspicuous a situation in his Church, would give him this earnest and foretaste of its duties, and mark him out to the Church by this token of his approbation. Since the kinsmen of the Lord were held in so much honour after his ascension¹, Symeon was probably called upon to assist at the council of Jerusalem², and was also entrusted with the care of one of those congregations, into which this Church, so numerous even under its sorest afflictions, was divided. But such consideration was attended with the reverse of worldly advantage, and with a great weight of spiritual responsibility. To be shepherd of a fold, from which it is impossible to keep off the assault of the wolf or the robber, is a situation of painfulness, which we are both unwilling, and (God be thanked) unable to conceive duly. Seated at the head-quarters of its most bitter enemies, this Church suffered much more than its sisters among the heathen, in proportion as a schismatic is always more hateful than an apostate. For it still maintained its connection with the Temple, and therefore appeared in the garb of a sect³.

¹ Euseb. H. E. iii. 11.

² Acts xv.

³ Acts iii. 1. xxi. 20. Euseb. H. E. ii. 23. iv. 5.

By incessant persecution its members were reduced to great poverty. With what delight, then, must Symeon have hailed the several arrivals of the Apostle of the Gentiles at Jerusalem with the contributions of the Heathen Churches. The relief, however, to the necessities of his flock would be the least among the causes of his gratification. For what a proof was here of the progress which the Gospel had made, not only over the face of the earth, but also in the depths of the human heart. The heathen had been bred up in a contempt and aversion for the Jew, and, after he had become Christian, had every reason to slight the Law of Moses. Yet the conformity to it of the Jewish Christian did not chill his charity. Little could Symeon then foresee that these Churches would in no long time quarrel among themselves upon a matter so indifferent as the day of celebrating the resurrection. He saw, too, in these gifts, a palpable representation of the accomplishment of the prophecies, which foretold the flocking of the Gentiles with gifts to Jerusalem; and looked forward in hope to the crowded courts and spiritual treasures of the heavenly Jerusalem.

Symeon was now advanced to a higher station, and a post of great peril, in this distressed Church. In one of the murderous riots with which the Jews ever and anon assailed the flock of Christ, they threw its bishop, James, the brother of the Lord, down from the battlements of the temple, and then stoned him until he expired¹. Upon this a solemn assembly was held of the Church, to which there came from all

¹ Euseb. H. E. ii. 23.

quarters the Apostles, (such at least as were within reach) the disciples and the kinsmen of the Lord. They elected Symeon into the place of James¹. Perhaps not only his relationship to the Lord, and private character, but also his age as a disciple, contributed to this choice. For, as heresy was now beginning to rear its head in the Church, it was of the utmost importance that they, whose authority was to be looked up to, should have been, if possible, eye-witnesses and hearers of the Lord himself. Such men would be able, by their own testimony, to keep their flocks clear from the forged traditions by which the heretics perverted the truth. Symeon was very shortly called upon to put this his talent to account. One Thebuthis, disappointed at not being elected rather than Symeon, headed a heresy², which must have miserably added to the distress of this afflicted Church. But Symeon had heard his Master say, "It must needs be that offences come. But woe to that man by whom the offence cometh³." He was not, therefore, confounded at the sight of this as yet strange spectacle; and the awful warning contained in this prophecy would stimulate him, were other motives wanting, to exert all his talents and opportunities, that no share of the guilt might be imputed to himself, if the gangrene made progress. Yet the feelings of a good shepherd, like Symeon, must have been painfully wrung, even if but one or two of his flock were infected. The malice and uncharitableness with which a deflection from Christian truth always fills the breast of the separatist, who now regards his

¹ Euseb. H. E. iii. 11.² Ib. iv. 22.³ Matt. xviii. 7.

former pastor with hatred much greater than any love which he once bore towards him ; the wranglings which now filled the house of peace ; the reckless disputations, on awful points, which the Lord had purposely left in mystery ; the mad perversions of the holy word ; the avowed contempt of established ordinances ; the railing accusation ; the unblushing falsehood, the audacious forgery — these were lamentable novelties in the yet virgin Church, and their outward effects were even still less horrible to Symeon, than the thought of the extreme jeopardy in which the eternal salvation of these, his wandering sheep, was involved. We, alas ! are so inured to such horrible sights, that we cannot see them in their proper hideousness. But to Symeon, his Church thus vitiated for the first time, must have seemed like a second fall of man. Oh that we, and all, could enter into the notions and feelings of this godly man, on the unity of the Church of God. How beautiful would she be in our sight, how happy, how unwearied would be our labour of love in building up each other into so glorious a temple. Alas ! we may as well endeavour to enter into the notions and feelings of the innocent Adam.

To counterbalance this disquietude from within, there was now unwonted peace from without. A succession of iniquitous and rapacious governors, who seem to have been raised up by God for preparing the execution of his awful judgment, were goading on the Jews to their fatal rebellion. The attention of the persecutor was thus too fully absorbed with his own concerns to attend to his usual employment of harassing the Christian Church. Now, therefore, it

had rest, and Symeon's utmost diligence would be exerted to separate his flock from the doomed nation. For by this time the prophecy of his Master was rapidly unfolding itself. The portentous signs which he had bidden him to expect, as harbingers of the approaching destruction, were already blazing in the sky. Even to us, who are certified from its fore-calculated appearance, that it is a thing in the regular course of nature, and therefore look for no consequences, a comet is an object of instinctive awe. The mind cannot contemplate a strangeness in the heavens without a feeling, however quickly subdued, of being brought under strange influence. What then must have been the feelings of Symeon at the unnatural spectacle, when a fiery sword hung in the sky over his dying country for a whole year¹. Now was his vigilance put to its utmost proof. He had, like Noah, to preach and fill the ark of salvation. He had not only to draw off his own flock apart from the doomed multitude, as the wheat for the garner from the tares for the fire, but also to win over and save as many as possible of the yet unconverted. God had chosen him as the fittest instrument for his merciful purpose: for, perhaps, none but he, who was kinsman of the Lord, who had heard the Almighty denouncer with his own ears, could have prevailed to keep the line of separation so clear as to fulfil his Master's prediction, that "not a hair of the head in all his followers should perish²." But, as it had been in the days of Noah, so was it now³. They

¹ Joseph. Bell. Jud. vi. 5. 3.

² Luke xxi. 18.

³ Matt. xxiv. 38.

ate, and they drank, and they were married: Men become accustomed to horrors, and the chance of repentance is often least when the danger is greatest. The same reckless passions which brought on the crisis, pampered by ample food, kick against all warning, either human or divine. Even such as are pricked with compunction find themselves too far gone to return. On! on! is the perpetual cry of our deluding evil spirit, and never ceases until we have rushed to the edge of the precipice, and cannot but fall headlong. Few, therefore, probably, were they who accepted Symeon's invitation to enter the ark.

Symeon had now brought his household of faith together, and was waiting the Lord's time. The first signal to be ready had been given. Jerusalem was compassed with armies¹. Christian hymn and prayer ascended amid the execrations of the doomed. The Temple, where murderers, and no longer righteousness now lodged², had, without doubt, ceased to be frequented by the flock of Christ. What an awful interval of suspense was this, when all the haunts of their devotion, all the monuments of the religion of their fathers, all the spots consecrated by the Lord's presence, yea their own places of assembly for prayer, were shortly to be mingled with blood, smoke, and fire, in one undistinguished ruin. But their houses of prayer were not, as the Temple to the Jew, necessary to their religion. These were not bound fast to the soil by local obligation. They were the accidental appendages, not the indispen-

¹ Luke xxi. 20.

² Isa. i. 21.

sable vehicle of the religion of the Gospel. Had they been more important, the resolute faith of this little flock would cheerfully have parted with them.

Amid this daily expectation of fleeing to the mountains¹, the last signal came from the Lord. Symeon and his church were warned by a Divine oracle to quit the devoted city, and take refuge in Pella, a city in the mountainous country beyond Jordan². An interruption of the blockade at this moment gave a free passage to their escape. Thus the ark was floated, and it rested as upon another Ararat. From this secure retreat Symeon heard but the rumours of wars, until the final and dreadful execution of his Master's denunciation was announced to him. It must have been with a strange mixture of sorrow and joy, that he heard this news. Jerusalem was dear to the heart of every Jew. His country was wiped out from the tablet of nations; his countrymen, in uncounted myriads, had been slain or sold; some of the sweetest and most natural associations of a long life were utterly broken up. But, on the other hand, the Lord's truth had been vindicated in the face of the whole earth, and to all succeeding ages. The yoke of their oppressor had ceased. His flock had been mercifully delivered by the Lord himself from the general calamity.

A.D. 70. What breathless awe must have attended his solemn announcement to his assembled church of this fearful consummation, and with what a fearful comment could he follow it up. The Lord had

¹ Luke xxi. 21.

² Euseb. iii. 5. Epiphan. de Mens. et Pond, 15.

mingled his prophecy of the judgment of this day with that of the last day, and he bade the witnesses of the one, prepare themselves for witnessing the other. The "great and dreadful day of the Lord," which had just passed over to the extent of Judæa, and to the death of the body, was the harbinger of another still greater and more dreadful day which should come to pass to the extent of the whole world, and to the death of the soul. He who had come in judgment on Jerusalem, should come a second time to judge the world. "You have already in your patience possessed your souls¹, (he might have said) to the salvation of this life; henceforward possess them in your patience to the salvation of the life to come. O pray without ceasing, and labour without being weary, that he who chose you for his own from the general doom on this day, may also choose you on that. This signal deliverance has made you responsible beyond all other men, and has bound you beyond all other men not to neglect so great salvation." Never, perhaps, had Symeon so much satisfaction in the tending of his flock as now. The heretics, most probably, had been left behind in Jerusalem, having refused the warning of their despised pastor. The late extraordinary deliverance had filled all hearts with thankfulness, and the late terrible judgment had vividly impressed upon them the fear of the Lord. Where such elements were working, there could not but be mutual love, unity, and peace.

How long the Church sojourned at Pella we know

¹ Luke xxi. 19.

not. We only know that in the reign of Adrian it was once again settled at Jerusalem¹. But we may reasonably conjecture that it returned under Symeon as soon as the troubles of Judæa were completely composed, and the axe and mattock of the Roman had done their last work at Jerusalem. At Pella they were among the heathen, and exposed to their insults. But the desolation of Jerusalem would afford them a secure retreat. They were burthened with little property; their sincere profession had kept them free from all worldly entanglement at Pella; and spiritual soldiers as they were, they were ready to strike their tents and march at a moment's warning. A few cabins erected on the ruins would be sufficient for their accommodation. They would therefore take the first opportunity of re-establishing themselves on a spot which, independent of great advantages, was full of the dearest and most sacred recollections. Our imagination is moved to accompany them in their pilgrimage. The caravan on recrossing the Jordan would pass through many scenes of the early ministry of the gospel, and Symeon would be enabled to point them out. As they brought both the days of his unbroken vigour, and his attendance on the Lord of life to mind, he would be moved by all the yearning of the natural and spiritual man to describe the events by which they had been consecrated. On the banks of the Jordan he might point out the spot where John had baptized, and perhaps might show the very stones from which the Baptist had rebuked

¹ Epiphanius de Mens. et Pond., c. 15.

his unbelieving countrymen. At Jericho he might call their attention to the spot where the two blind men were healed, and perhaps the sycamore tree was still existing up which Zaccheus climbed to see the Lord pass by. As they wound up the defile they passed over the ground consecrated by the parable of the good Samaritan, and here Symeon might remind them of the awful judgment which had overtaken priest and Levite, and bid them take heed to themselves how they discharged their spiritual priesthood, and made it not an empty show, having no substance of works of charity and love. But when he came to the spot where the Temple used first salute the traveller's eye from its rocky height, and nothing was visible but sky, what need of a sermon was there! How utterly had their Lord's prophecy been fulfilled! As natural men they could not but weep at this first and most convincing mark of the utter overthrow of their country. But as spiritual men, how deeply did they rejoice! Symeon, indeed, like Ezra, returned to his native city and found it a heap of ruins. But he had not, like Ezra, to restore a church which was fettered by carnal locality. He came not with a crowd to rear anew the place of sacrifice of bulls and rams. On the contrary, the very desolation declared that a grand obstacle had been removed. The new dispensation was now enthroned without a rival. Nothing remained but in subjection to Christ. Throughout the whole world no sacrifice ordained of God was offered up, save in the name of Jesus.

Arrived at Jerusalem, Symeon was once again amidst the dearest objects of his memory. The

Roman fire and mattock could not remove the Mount of Olives, nor Mount Calvary, nor the Mounts Zion and Moriah, however they may have destroyed the garden of Gethsemane, and the streets through which the Redeemer had ridden in triumph to the temple, or carried his cross to Calvary. How indescribable was the change! Where was now the priest? where was now the scribe? where was now the pharisee, with his long robes and phylacteries? The sword had devoured them, and their utter absence made the bosom more full of the presence of the Lord who had denounced and fulfilled this judgment upon them. Thus Symeon once again re-established the Church of Jerusalem on her ancient locality. Here, seated amid the ruins of the Temple, and of the palaces of kings, amid broken monuments of past grandeur, she signified to her children and to pilgrims, in the most lively manner, the endurance of whatever is Christ's throughout all chances and changes of the things of earth. Amid departed friends, broken fortunes, yea even lost country, the Christian stands erect, immoveable, without essential loss. The enemy cannot destroy his temple, cannot remove his sacrifice, cannot slaughter his priest, cannot divest him of a single portion of his spiritual trappings and essential possessions¹.

And now that the centre of unity and rational use

¹ Epiphanius de Mens. et Pond., c. 14., says, that in Adrian's time the Christians had a church erected on the site of the Upper Chamber, to which the Apostles retired after the Lord's ascension. If so, we must understand Josephus's account of the erasing of the city, (Bell. Jud. vii. 1. 1.) with some trifling exception.

of the Jewish observances was gone with the Temple, we wonder at first why Symeon should still retain any part of them. A second consideration amply justifies him. We must recollect that if the question of the circumcision of the Gentiles was not so clear, but that its solution required a solemn council of the Church with the Apostles at its head, the abandonment of its obligations by the Jew, could not appear so easy a question to Symeon as it appears to us. But moreover, Symeon had good reasons for his retention. The fall of the temple was likely to bring the better-minded among the Jews to their senses. It was a thundering blow which could not but startle them, and in which the Lord might call on many a Saul. But by abandoning the law at this moment, Symeon would have shut the door in the face of the converts, who were not prepared to forego what they esteemed at the least a national mark impressed by God himself. He left the change for time, the safest innovator, to accomplish. And he was justified by the event. The hold of the law, gradually becoming more feeble, was soon at the mercy of the first accident, and in little more than twenty years after his death, his flock willingly forewent every badge of Judaism for the sake of the privilege of dwelling in Ælia, or the new Jerusalem which Adrian built, and made forbidden ground to every Jew¹.

Symeon had now attained the age of Moses, having seen a hundred and twenty years of prodigious

¹ Epiphanius, *ib.* Sulpic. Sever. ii. 45. Euseb. H. E. iv. 6.

events, as far exceeding in wonder and sublimity all that the former beheld, as fulfilment is more excellent than preparation. He had seen the prophet arise whom Moses had foretold; he had seen the Lamb slain which Moses had prefigured; he had seen the dreadful judgment descend which Moses had threatened; he had seen the covenant dissolved amid fearful prodigies and horrible ruin on Mount Sion, which Moses had made amid the thunder and lightning, and quaking of Mount Sinai. Thus he had been vouchsafed a view of the land, and now was ready to depart. The continual rebellions of the Jews, in which they engaged under the expectation of the coming of the Messiah, the Son of David, naturally provoked the Roman Emperors to seek out this family for extirpation. Domitian had begun the experiment¹, and the policy approved itself also to Trajan. The malice of the Jews turned against the Christians that which was intended against themselves, and Trajan's treatment of the Church gave them a double handle against Symeon. They charged him at the tribunal of Atticus, the Governor of Syria, both with being of the seed of David and a Christian². In consequence of this, he was put to severe torture for many days, and bore the long and sharp agony with such fortitude, as to excite the surprise of the governor and spectators, who wondered how an old man of a hundred and twenty could endure it. Unable to wring from him a denial of his Master, they ended with nailing his mangled body to the cross. On this painful seat, which was

¹ Euseb. H. E. iii. 32.

² Ibid.

now the only throne of the house of David, and on which he succeeded his Redeemer, he expired. With his death a thick veil descends upon the history of the Church of Jerusalem for many successions¹.

It is impossible not to be struck with the late period to which the inspection of apostolical men was prolonged in the churches of Jerusalem and Antioch, especially when we know that Symeon was succeeded by thirteen bishops within the next thirty years², and that at Rome and Alexandria, the succession had reached the fourth degree before the death of these martyrs, who were but in the second. The preceding narrative will have shown why the Lord's providence should have continued the long and steady guidance of his kinsmen in the flesh to a Church beset with such difficulties as that of Jerusalem. And the Capital of the East, at the very focus of heresy, will appear to have required the same indulgence. It is mournful to reflect upon these early outbreaks of division in the church; and we cannot but acknowledge the merciful wisdom of Him who inflicted the rod of persecution, often and severely. How evidently is it the correction of Him who chastiseth whom He loveth! Quickly indeed are all minor and captious differences of opinion wrung out and expelled by the pressure of one general calamity. The very participation of the same cup of sorrow suggests the notion of fellowship. When the communion of the cup of the Lord's blood fails to produce its effect of peace, he makes us

¹ Ibid. iv. 5.

² Ibid.

drink of this. May we never, in our uncharitableness, provoke his administration of the last cup—the cup of his fury and wrath, of which whosoever tastes must drink it to the very dregs in all its bitterness of woe.

IGNATIUS.

Remarks on Christian Antioch—Ignatius elected its Bishop—his qualifications—Distractions of his Church—his interview with Trajan, and departure from Antioch in bonds—his meeting with Polycarp at Smyrna—his letters thence—arrival at Rome, and reception by the Brethren—his Martyrdom.

THE early triumphs of the Gospel were very remarkable. They were gained over the most bitter of enemies, on the most disadvantageous ground. In its very cradle it crushed the old serpent, and two cities, notorious for the dissolute manners of their inhabitants, bear testimony to its irresistible power! They were even among the first and most hearty welcomers of its tidings. But Antioch on the Orontes was both prior to Corinth in time, as the residence of a Christian Church, and superior in the magic of its allurements. The beautiful suburb of Daphne offered the most sensual delights, which were both more seductive, and more gross, as being indulged in under the pretence of religious worship. Woe to him who strayed beyond the pale of Christ's vineyard into these consecrated groves of the sun. He lost the divine image, and was transformed into the likeness

of swine. Added to this peculiar attraction were all the allurements of an ancient capital, and of a commercial city. She was the acknowledged Queen of the East, and the court of the Roman Governor still maintained some remnant of the splendour of the Seleucidæ. By means of her port Seleuceia she had communication with the West, and connected the trade of the Euphrates with that of the Tiber. Her population, even in the days of Chrysostom, when she had been dethroned by Constantinople, amounted to 200,000 inhabitants¹. In this unlikely soil sprang up the vine of the earliest Gentile Church. Here Peter and Paul began, on the same ground, those labours which they afterwards transferred to Corinth, and terminated by a joint martyrdom at Rome. Here the followers of Jesus first received the appellation of Christians. And from the ordination of the Prophets of this Church St. Paul received his commission to preach to the Gentiles. So that if any Church could set up the lofty claim of Mother of all the Gentile Churches, it was she, and Rome must be content to rank among her daughters. Little, indeed, did the Roman satirist, when he indignantly exclaimed against the corruptions introduced from this prostitute Queen of the East, and the importation of her viols, her timbrels, and her harlot daughters², dream of the precious treasure which came in with this unholy freight; and that holiness beyond his powers of conception; consolation for the evils of life, which turned them into enjoyments; immortality proved

¹ See Chrysostom's Sermon on Ignatius.

² Juvenal, Sat. iii. 62.

beyond all scruple of doubt, had already arrived from this impure quarter. If the Laurel-grove of the Sun sent its corrupt delights, the vineyard of the Son of God sent also its sanctifying influences, and the disease and the remedy came from the same soil.

This city, therefore, was a most important position obtained for the Gospel, and St. Paul made it the head-quarters of his various missions, until he was carried to Rome. The charge of it could not but be one of the highest responsibility, and Ignatius, to whom it was committed, is thus introduced to us at once in the strongest terms of commendation.

His name would lead us to suppose him of Roman origin, and he was probably one of that considerable body of the citizens of Antioch, who owed their birth, at least dwelling there, to the abode of the court of the Roman governor, and the residence of his legions. His character would lead us to the same conclusion, which is that of strong resolution, practical decision, plain thought, and blunt expression: although this latter may now and then change its style for somewhat of oriental inflation, under the strong excitement of his peculiar situation and influence of Asiatic education. He appears to have inherited together with these the national talent for government, of which indeed they are the proper accompaniments, and there was ample occasion for its exercise. The Churches of the East had already been invaded by those pernicious doctrines, which, after many changes of shape, at length ate them up as would a cancer. The capital would, of course, be exposed to a general attack from all quarters. The multitudes that flowed in to supply her many

demands would import their opinions, and vanity and ambition, the fundamental qualities of heresy, would not willingly be satisfied with a less conspicuous stage. The Church of Antioch, therefore, could not have chosen a more proper successor to its first Bishop Evodius, than Ignatius. Besides, his straight-forward good sense and uncompromising spirit, which were so necessary to resist the artful insinuations and open avowals of the heretics, he had been a disciple of the Apostle St. John¹, a circumstance the importance of which is very insufficiently appreciated in these our days, when the canon of Scripture has been acknowledged for seventeen centuries, and link must be broken after link, through long times and countries wide apart, in the chain of testimony, before doubt can be established, both as to whether it be entire, and whether the single books be genuine and incorrupt,—when immemorial and universal custom has produced an instinctive belief in its authenticity, as strong in most minds as if it had rested upon the evidence of their own eyes and ears. But at that early period an individual might not know whether there were not Apostolic writings which had not yet reached him, and might not even be able to distinguish an artful imposition from true Scripture, since few could read Scripture for themselves (in those days of manuscripts), and must depend upon the accuracy of their memory, and soundness of their judgment, to ascertain any difference between a forgery and what they had heard read in the Church. An indisputable Apostolic succession,

¹ Act. Martyr. S. Ignat. c. 1.

therefore, was of the utmost consequence in every Church¹, and, as long as it was possible, the presidency of a man who had conversed with the Apostles; he was a sure touchstone always at hand to his flock, and saved them the intricate analysis of the ore, to which but very few could have been competent. Ignatius could certify that such and such opinions were expressly contrary to the preaching of St. John, and that such and such writings had never received any authentic sanction.

Even these days of schism are unable to supply us with an adequate conception of the view which presented itself to Ignatius, from his chair at Antioch. The worst sect among us is free from the insane extravagance to which the heresy of those times proceeded. The latter times were indeed come², and the Churches of Asia were not exempted from the troubles predicted to Ephesus. The Jewish leaven was still fermenting in the Christian mass³, and a worse corruption still (if it did not go hand in hand with the other), was the introduction of principles which afterwards became but too notorious as maintained by the Gnostic heresy. These denied the reality of Christ's body, and asserted that the birth, baptism, crucifixion, and resurrection, had been undergone by a mere phantom⁴. Whence their

¹ See the well known passage in Tertullian de Præscript. Hær. 36. and Adv. Marcion. iv. 6.

² Acts xx. 29. 1 Tim. iv. 1. Ignat. ad Ephes. 11.

³ Igna. Ep. Magnea, 8, 9, 10. Philadelph. 6.

⁴ See the whole strain of Ignatius's Epistles. The opening of that to the Smyrnæans and Trallians, 9, 10, may serve as a specimen.

espousers were called Docetæ or Phantomists. Consistency obliged them to reject all Scripture, both of the Old and New Testament¹, to withdraw from the Eucharist of the Church, which implied the reality of Christ's body², and of course to deny the cardinal doctrines of the atonement and resurrection of the body. The fruit was worthy of the tree, and their morality is accused of being as corrupt as their doctrine, at least in the mass of persons. They dealt not in works of charity³, but in works unworthy of God⁴. Of course they were vain, self-sufficient, loquacious, and were continually exciting troubles, both by underhand practices and by open affront⁵. Ignatius was not the man to parley with such persons. His natural character, in the first place was quite opposed to them. Being a man of much thought and few words⁶, he revolted from their loquacity. His strong good sense despised their tortuous subtilty. His firmness was proof both against persuasion and threats. And full of the Holy Spirit, he detected and refuted their false doctrine. But the infection of the example of these men could not but have its effect upon the discipline

¹Ep. Smyrn. 5.

² Ep. Smyrn. 7. But they seem to have had an Eucharist of their own as well as Baptism, *ib.* 8; Philadelph. 4. So had Marcion, who entertained the same notions of Christ's body. See those doctrines in greater detail in his Life.

³ Ep. Smyrn. 6. But perhaps this charge was owing to their absence from the Eucharist, which would deprive the Church of their contributions.

⁴ Ephes. 7.

⁵ Ephes. 10. 15.

⁶ This may be gathered from his style. See also Ephes. 6, Philadelph. 1.

even of the orthodox, some of whom, full perhaps of spiritual pride, from being driven into the opposite extreme of narrow-minded strictness, slighted the authority of the bishop, even in cases where his presence had been always deemed indispensable hitherto¹.

Such were the fights from within, and they were much more painful than those from without²: though these were sufficiently trying. The persecution of Domitian reached Antioch, and Ignatius was in continual anxiety about the weaker members of his flock. With the helm of fasting, prayer, and expounding of Scripture, he kept the vessel of his Church straight on her course, and secure amid the violent storm³. A long interval of peace followed, in which the heretics were busy as heretofore, until another storm arose, and constraint from without again compelled the Churches to order within. Trajan, flushed with his victories on the Danube, determined to renew them on the Euphrates. He engaged in war with the Parthians, and made Antioch his head-quarters in preparing for his expedition. As the foe was an ancient and formidable rival of Rome, it is likely that Trajan accompanied his human preparations with every means of procuring the divine favour. But the public shows would renew the popular cry, "Away with the Christians⁴,"

¹ Magnes. 4. It may also be gathered from the whole strain of the letters.

² Chrysostom's Sermon on Ignatius, p. 502. Saville.

³ Martyr. Ignat. 1.

⁴ Or, as it ran in Tertullian's time, "to the lion with the Christians." See Apologet. 40, de Spectac. 27, de Idol. 14.

and the toleration of these godless men would appear undutiful behaviour to the gods whom Trojan now wished especially to appease; and, elate with his past conquests, and anxious for the future, he was in no humour to brook opposition from the Christians. In this frame of mind, he nearly lost his life by a terrible earthquake, which spread dreadful consternation through Antioch, crowded as it was with an immense army. A heavy persecution descended in consequence upon the heads of the Christians. Ignatius, as Bishop, would be eagerly sought for. But he saved them the trouble, and presented himself before the Emperor, as the apologist of the Christian cause, and the guardian of his flock. The conference between these two celebrated soldiers of the world and of Christ was short and pithy. Ignatius freely told Trajan that he was wrong in worshipping the gods of the Gentiles, and declared to him the one God and his only Son Jesus Christ. It ended in a decree of Trajan, to this effect—"We give orders that Ignatius, who asserts that he carries about within himself the crucified one, be put in bonds under the custody of soldiers, and carried to the great Rome, to be food for the wild beasts, and to make sport for the people." On hearing this, the holy martyr exclaimed, "I thank thee, O Master, that thou hast deigned to honour me with perfect love towards thee, binding me thus with iron bonds in fellowship with thy Apostle Paul." So he put on the chains with exceeding joy, and after having prayed for his Church, and recommended it with tears to the care and protection of the Lord, was

hurried away on his long journey, under a guard of ten soldiers¹.

(A.D. 115.) Accompanied by his deacons, Philo and Agathopus², he was conveyed down to Seleuceia, the port of Antioch, and thus entered upon that track of St. Paul³, so much of which he followed with joyful recognition on his way to Rome. Hence he was conveyed by sea to Smyrna. Perhaps, owing to Trajan's expedition, no ship was ready to sail direct for Italy, and while they were waiting for one, the season for so long a voyage may be past³. The Lord had great comfort in store for his faithful servant at Smyrna. Its Bishop, Polycarp, had been his fellow-disciple under St. John. If the meeting of schoolfellows long parted is so full of delightful and tender recollections, what must it have been here, where boyhood and youth had been periods of such innocence, that their joys could be mutually recalled to mind without reserve, where their teacher had been not only a Christian, but an Apostle of Christ, who had lain with his head in the bosom of his Lord, where every lesson was the unwritten word of God. But they had written it

¹ Act. Martyr. 2.

² Ep. Smyrn. 10. Philadelph. 11.

³ It was now about the end of July or beginning of August, Ignat. Ep. Rome. 10. The season was over at least as early as October. See Acts xxvii. 9. Perhaps he was sent to Rome as a Roman citizen (see Pliny's famous letter to Trajan). For, though the Emperor was not there, the people were whom he represented, and Trajan was exact in maintaining all the republican forms. The free access to his person seems against the supposition that the long overland journey was intended to increase the sufferings of Ignatius.

on the fleshly tablets of their hearts, and their human affection for each other was exalted by that divine love which they had learned from the Apostle of love. They were now to meet for the last time after many years of separation. One was on his appointed road to the death by which he was to glorify the Lord, and the other perhaps was already conscious that himself was destined to follow. Who shall describe the first and last embraces,—conceive the saluting and parting words of such friends. When has the name of Christ been pronounced in mutual blessing with more fervency and faith. And when has the sure and certain hope of the joyful resurrection of the dead more completely turned the pang of earthly separation into the joy of anticipated reunion. The priests and deacons joyfully seconded the affectionate offices of their bishops, and the devout women administered to his comforts with that minuteness and quickness of attention which women alone can give. Alce, and Daphne, and the family of Tavia, are mentioned by him in terms of grateful affection¹.

His arrival at Smyrna produced also a lively emotion throughout the Churches of Asia. And the principal of them sent to pay due reverence and respect to this other disciple of their beloved John, upon his glorious confession, by deputations of the most honourable men among them. Ephesus probably had seen him grow up in grace and wisdom at the feet of John, and she sent her bishop Onesimus, with his deacons Barrhus and Crocus, and with

¹ Ep. Smyrn. 13.

Enpluss and Fronto¹. The Magnesians came represented in their bishop Damas, their priests Bassus and Apollonius, and their deacon Sotion². The Trallians deputed their bishop Polybius³, and the Philadelphians their bishop also⁴. Here was met a Christian council indeed, but not to settle the disputes raised by the errors of selfish vanity or cold-hearted speculation, not to engage in sharp debate, and perhaps vent uncharitable invective. It was met for the purpose of unfeigned charity and energetic love, and it may truly have said, "It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us⁵." For not only was his Spirit among them in all fulness of grace and love, but also in excellent gifts which He imparted through the hands of Ignatius⁶. To this holy assembly Ignatius preferred a fervent request for the co-operation of their prayers to support him in the fight of a good confession, and gave a solemn charge to beware of heresy, which was now becoming rife among them, and to hold fast to the tradition of the Apostles⁷. Nor was he satisfied with verbal exhortation to the deputies, but also wrote letters from Smyrna to the churches themselves, — namely, to those of Ephesus, Magnesia, and Tralles.

¹ Ep. Ephes. 2. The Ephesians are mentioned jointly with the Smyrnians in Magnes. 15. Philadelph. 11. Trall. 13; and his messengers to Rome are Ephesians, Rom. 10. All this distinction looks like the renewal of an old connexion.

² Ep. Magnes. 2.

³ Ep. Trall. 1.

⁴ Ep. Philadelph. 1.

⁵ Acts xv. 28.

⁶ Act. Martyr. 3.

⁷ Euseb. iii. 36.

The prevailing topic of these Epistles is watchfulness against heresy, and, as necessarily connected with this, obedient communion with the bishops, priests, and deacons¹. "Be careful (he says) to have one eucharist. For there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup for the communion of his blood; one altar, as there is one bishop, with the presbytery and deacons, who are my fellow-servants; so that what ye do, ye may do according to God¹." He had indeed but too good reason to insist in the strongest terms on this point. The government of the church was necessarily a prime object of attack with the false teachers. They must break the vessel before they could spill in the dust its water of life. They must ruin all discipline of unity before they could withdraw members to their standard. As long as they obeyed and heard their teachers, the faithful would not listen to their seductions. His expressions may seem hyberbolical to some, but it can only be to such as make no account of the brevity of the style of these letters, (which were written, too, by snatches amid continual interruptions) and the totally unchristian nature of

¹ So interwoven is the mention of these three orders with the whole texture, that no supposition of interpolation will avail. The Presbyterians, therefore, are driven to take the short cut of denying the authenticity of the whole. See their objections triumphantly refuted by Pearson in his *Vindiciæ Ignatianæ*, of which the general reader may see the essence in Dupin's account of Ignatius, in his *History of Ecclesiastical writers*. Even Lardner, with a candour that does honour to him, admits their genuineness. Of course, the shorter Epistles only are meant here, as enumerated by Eusebius.

² Ep. Philadelph. 4.

the heresies of the day. He tells them to obey their bishop as Christ does the Father¹. Again, to obey him as Christ, their priests as the Apostles, their deacons as the commandments of God². Though more in detail, these analogies do not go beyond that of St. Paul: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands as unto the Lord³." No bishop of those churches need be further removed than by a second succession from the Apostles; and Polycarp, and perhaps more, was in the first. They were fit standards therefore of sound doctrine, and had a commission which no other men could have. The very fact proved that they who separated from them separated from Christ, for these separatists held doctrines totally opposed to the Gospel in spirit and in letter. The flocks might indeed have been told to avoid this and that error and been provided against each with a detail of refutation. But would Ignatius (especially when he could spare so little time) do this, when he could refer them at once to a standard, and give them so summary a means of detecting false doctrine? And when day after day heresy assumed some new shape, and no sooner had he opened his lips upon one novelty than another sprang up, how could he effectually forewarn men, but by advising adherence to the bishop? To these very men, in fact, we appeal at this day for the authenticity of Scripture. They form the first link of that long chain which separates us from the Apostles, and their

¹ Ep. Smyrn. 8. Magnes. 7..

² Ep. Trall. 2.

³ Ephes. v. 22.

testimony is the critical point of the whole evidence.

Before he left Smyrna, he wrote also an Epistle to the Romans, in which he delivers himself with all the eagerness of approaching martyrdom. He entreats that they would not intercede to prevent that consummation upon which his heart was set. His expressions seem high-flown and even bombastic to us, incapable as we are of entering adequately into the mind of a martyr of those days, when to live was to be absent from Christ, and to die was to be with him, when his death would preach the Gospel more widely and impressively than his life, and be the means of confirmation to his own brethren, and of conversion to the heathen. In this letter, too, as in the previous, he requests their prayers for his afflicted Church of Antioch. It was never out of his mind: "Remember in your prayers the Church of Syria, which instead of me hath God for its Pastor; Jesus Christ alone and your love will be its Bishop¹." There is something exquisitely beautiful and tender in this simple sentence.

He was hurried from Smyrna by his guard, who were eager to take him to Rome in time for the games of a great festival, and must have treated him with great harshness to wring from him the complaints which he makes of them. The next stage was Troas, where he was refreshed with the news of the relaxation of the persecution at Antioch. He here found time to write to Polycarp, and to the Smyrnæans, and also to the Philadelphians, thanking

¹ Ep. Rom. 9.

them for their successful prayers, and kind offices to himself, giving them the same warnings as he had already given to the other churches, and praying them to send one of their body to Antioch to congratulate that church¹. Here such as had accompanied him from Smyrna left him, and with his two deacons he sailed to Greece, and landed at Neapolis. The churches which St. Paul had founded in Europe now lay in his road, and must have deeply engaged the curiosity and study of one who was so eager in following upon his track. At Philippi especially he was treated with great marks of love and reverence², and eager to retain by them his precious lessons, they wrote to request from Polycarp copies of the letters which he had written to him and to the rest. Still as he went on he met monuments of the labours of the Apostle of the Gentiles, and still his longing was increased to join him in his rest from his labours. At last he quitted the Grecian continent at Epidamnus.

He was now fast approaching the end which he had been so long and fervently desiring. A short delay was occasioned by their being baffled by the wind in an attempt to land at Puteoli, and considerable disappointment to Ignatius, who wished much

¹ Some have concluded that Ignatius desired Polycarp to appoint a bishop for Antioch (see Dupin). But the expressions are the same as in the letter to the Smyrnæans and Philadelphians. Compare Ep. Polycarp, 7; Smyr. 11; Philadelph. 10. It would have been a strange assumption over the rights of the Antiochians.

² Ep. Polycarp ad Philip. i. 13.

to enter Italy at the same point as St. Paul, and pursue the track of his journey to Rome. They made land, however, at the port which was at the mouth of the Tiber. The soldiers hurried him hence, since they feared that the festival was fast running to its close, and the bishop as eagerly accompanied them. On reaching Rome, he was immediately surrounded by the brethren, who received him with a strange mixture of joy and sorrow—with joy at the sight of so holy and celebrated a man, who had been, like their lately lost Clement, a disciple of the Apostles; with sorrow that such a man would be so shortly lost to them and to the church. Some of them, in despite of the charge in his letter, eagerly demanded to interpose for his life. But he as eagerly repelled the proposal, repeating probably the several expressions of his letter: "Let me be food for beasts, through whom I may attain unto God. I am God's wheat, and shall be ground by the teeth of beasts, so that I may be found pure bread of Christ." "May I have the benefit of the beasts which have been prepared for me, and I pray that they be found prepared for me. I will provoke them quickly to devour me, and not (as they have sometimes done) to cower and leave me alone. And if they be unwilling I will force them. Pardon me, I know what is good for me. Now do I begin to be a disciple. Let nothing of things visible or invisible grudge me the attainment of Christ. Fire and the cross, and throngs of beasts, cutting, tearing asunder, wrenching of bones apart, chopping of limbs, the grinding of my whole body,—let all these evil inflictions of the devil come against

me, provided only I win Christ¹." Such were the strong expressions of this honest and ardent martyr, who inherited much of the fire of St. Peter, by whom some say he was ordained bishop². After having embraced them all, and asked from them that which was true charity, (namely, to let him die) and extended the exhortation which he had already given them by letter, they all knelt down, and he in the midst of them besought the Son of God in behalf of the Churches, for the ceasing of the persecution, and for the mutual love of the brethren. He was then hurried off to the amphitheatre.

There, insolent with revelling, and maddened to cruelty by the sight of the blood of dying gladiators, the people of Rome were expecting the appearance of the old man, and raised, no doubt, a shout when he was produced before them. For the first time in his life he beheld the interior of an amphitheatre—a sight forbidden to the eyes of the Christian. He beheld the assembled majesty of the lords of this world, their senate, their magistrates, and, O strange and impious spectacle! their women and consecrated virgins, looking upon death's shocking and varied agonies with composed countenances, and almost drinking in the streams of blood with their eyes, amid savage delight. It was truly the temple of the Prince of this world. Can we wonder that, in such a place, generally began the first cry for persecution³; that there resided his peculiar inspiration; that there the sight of a helpless and venerable old man, of blame-

¹ Ep. Rom. 4. 5.

² Chrysostom's Sermon.

³ Tertull. de Spectac. 27.

less life, and yet brought to suffer the death of the worst malefactors¹, moved no pity, but rather provoked rage? How little did the mighty ones of that day imagine, that the obscure sufferer, who stood before them, would leave behind him an everlasting name, to their shame, and to his Master's glory; and that the blood of the saints, with which they were now drunken, should be the means of making many like him, until their whole empire should be full of them! Some few hearts, perhaps, at that moment, were pricked with the first entrance of God's grace. They pitied, they admired, they loved, and they believed. They who began with the Amphitheatre ended with the Church. But the vast multitude, with shouts, beheld the preacher of love and peace placed upon the spot which was assigned to assassins and murderers, and cheered the beasts as they were loosed upon him. The agony of the blessed Martyr was short. The beasts quickly dispatched him, and so ravenously, that only the harder and more rugged bones were left. Thus was fulfilled his desire, that the beasts may be his tomb, and leave nothing of his body. So should he give trouble to none in collecting his remains².

His faithful deacons gathered the scanty relics, and conveyed them to Antioch, where being decently enwrapped in linen, they were preserved as an inestimable treasure. This was on December 20th, A.D. 115³. Nearly three hundred years after, a panegyric,

¹ Tertull. de Animâ. 33. de Spectac. 21.

² Ep. Rom. 4.

³ The proper date (taken from the Acts of his martyrdom) is

splendid in all the ornaments of human eloquence, was pronounced over him, from the 'golden mouth' of one of his fellow-citizens, and minister of his own Church, who could boast, and was worthy of, a spiritual lineage directly derived from him. But the simple and apostolical spirit of the Martyr would have been equally astonished and dissatisfied at the oratorical flourish of Chrysostom¹, and his sight would not have been less pained than his ears, could he have beheld the pompous decoration and ceremony of the place where it was delivered. The vain and superstitious memorials of the martyr, raised by his fellow townsmen, have now completely vanished. An earthquake, much more violent than that which, among other causes, provoked his death, utterly overthrew, within a few years past, the native city and Church of Ignatius and Chrysostom. But, amid the ruins of all things of this world, the saints are held in everlasting remembrance, and the breasts of men, through all lands, and through all ages, are their sepulchres. Turning back to them, we see the faith in which we must walk through things temporal, so that we finally lose not the things eternal. We see the intrinsic vanity of the most formidable hindrances to our course. This blessed Martyr has received his reward, and lives. But the adversaries of flesh and blood, and senseless matter, which exerted their violence to compel him, and the friends and bodily delights

A.D. 107. But Pearson and others have shown, that the date given in the text is much more likely to be the true one.

¹ The description which he gives of the translation of his remains to Antioch, while it well suits the practice of his own age, is totally opposed to that of the martyr's.

which might have endeavoured to allure him, to a compromise with the world, where are they now? In such a retrospect how full of meaning to us are these expressions of his, "I take no delight in the food of corruption, nor in the pleasures of this life ¹." And how happy should we be, if, amidst the love of this life, which is putting the world in motion around us, and presenting before us its continual round of tumultuous passion, we could repeat honestly in our hearts after him, "My love has been crucified ²."

¹ Ep. Rom. 7.

² Ibid.

POLYCARP.

Exemplary state of the Church of Smyrna—Polycarp elected Bishop—Advantages of his Education—Compared with Ignatius—Letter to Philippians—Visit to Rome—Its happy results—Beginning of the Paschal Controversy—School established at Smyrna—A Persecution bursts out—Polycarp's retreat and arrest—His condemnation—Last prayer—Martyrdom.

AMONG the cities of Proconsular Asia, Smyrna was pre-eminent, for the wealth of her citizens, the magnificence of her structures, and the beauty of her situation¹. By a singularly good fortune, her literary name is equally great, both in Heathen and in Christian records. She was among the seven cities which laid claim to the birth of Homer, and shares with Chios the fairest pretensions; and she was among the seven cities addressed by John, and shares with Philadelphia his unalloyed commendation. Her Church did not indeed resemble her city in the splendour of outward apparel. But she excelled in the beauty and brightness of her inward holiness. She was even

¹ See Aristides in his *Monodia*, and address to M. Aurelius on the destruction of Smyrna.

poor, as the world understands poverty, but she was rich, as the kingdom of heaven interprets riches. In her infancy she was much harassed, both by the avowed and insidious attacks of the Jews¹. But these were only an introduction to still more serious assailment from the Heathen, who came against her openly with the sword, and more secretly with his philosophy.

The life of the first of her Bishops² was long enough to witness both these attacks, and was entirely spent, and at last laid down, in warding them off from his fold. This was Polycarp, whose name, well expressing the abundant fruitfulness of his works, has been held in deep reverence through every age of the Church.

He was, as we have already seen, a disciple of St. John. So did he recommend himself to that inspired discerner of spirits, that he ordained him with his own hands as Bishop of Smyrna. In this ordination perhaps some other Apostles assisted, who had also aided in his education³. With such high qualifications did he enter upon his charge. And this gave him ample opportunities of putting to account the inestimable advantages which he had enjoyed. That word, which we read in inanimate letters, or hear through the voice of an uninspired interpreter, he received from the lips of the writer, accompanied

¹ Revel. ii. 9.

² Some (but not of any authority) give him a predecessor in Bucolus.

³ Irenæus, c. Hær. iii. 3, 4. and quoted by Euseb. E. H. iv. 14. uses the plural. But this needs not necessarily imply more than one. Tertullian de Præscript. 32. mentions John only.

with the living language of features and gestures. That application of it which we make to daily life by meditation, he made by the daily, and even hourly, instruction which he was receiving. All that he heard in the way of advice, or injunction, was a portion of the word. It was around him, like the air in which he lived and breathed; while to us it is like the water, which we must purposely apply. He was witness also to a daily practical comment upon it by its inspired deliverer, full both of the graces and of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. He looked on no picture of the imagination, framed by inadequate study and imperfect practice. But before his eyes was the living body, were the living actions, were the living words of the Apostle. He was of course aware, during the whole of this period, of the extraordinary privileges which he was enjoying, and if perhaps a momentary forgetfulness should intervene, the Apostle would not leave him long to its indulgence, but would continually be impressing upon him the awful situation in which he was standing. "You are to be a witness to the Church (he might say) of the doctrine which I have ever taught, and will have to maintain the value of your testimony by correspondent practice. Evil days are even now come, and my testimony is perpetually demanded against false teachers. In a few years you, and the few who have enjoyed the same privileges with you, will have to supply this from your former conversation with a deceased Apostle of the Lord. Take heed to yourself, therefore; from me you derive light, and diligence will make you a bright and guiding lamp to the Church of God, set upon a hill. While

negligence will turn your light into a mischievous wisp-light, and seduce men into the bog of error. Life and death, both to yourself and to others, are now before you, and every day has its share in determining your choice between them." Polycarp could not see the whole breadth and depth of the prospect of the future Church, which has become our astounding retrospect. He would have been overpowered with fright at the giddy height on which he stood. The veil of futurity hid it immediately from his eyes. Yet prophecy would tell him enough to warn him of his peculiar responsibility. He knew that himself was appointed to be one of a few main links of Christian testimony, on each of which would depend a multitude of others to the end of time. Its metal, therefore, must be genuine, and its formation strong.

His conduct in his ministry was in accordance with these awful reflections. He was severely tried. Tribulation and poverty afflicted his flock, and the Jews were continually assailing it. But, amid these difficulties, he obtained a good report from the mouth of his former instructor; and most precious, inasmuch as it came not merely from human lips, but was laid upon them by the Lord of the Church himself, who, in his address to the Churches of Asia, bestows the highest commendation on the Angel of the Church of Smyrna¹. He was, at the same time, warned of a future open and distinct persecution, and in terms which seem to hint his own martyrdom. Such a hint would convey no terror to the heart of Poly-

¹ Revel. ii. 9. I have adopted the likely supposition, which Usher and Cave have, of Polycarp being this Angel.

carp. He would accept it as a kind admonition to make the most of the time allotted him, and as a comfortable promise of rest from his labours.

(A.D. 115.) He received an earnest of this, when Ignatius arrived at Smyrna, on his road to that eternal rest, and with a heart overflowing with joy and thankfulness for its near approach. How seriously, and yet cheerfully, would they discuss together their common prospect of martyrdom. The subject was not indeed new to them. Even in their youthful days, when death intrudes his notice on few minds, these companions must often have conversed upon this probable termination of their career, and regarded themselves as sheep fattening for slaughter. The different tempers of these friends adds great interest to our conception of such a conversation. Ignatius was full of Peter's fire. But Polycarp had all the dove-like gentleness of John. Ignatius was impatient to obtain the crown. Polycarp was content to wait the time of enjoyment. Both were humble. But Ignatius exults in the prospect of dying the death of a malefactor. Polycarp calmly resigned himself to it. It is this resemblance of character to his master that keeps his privilege of having been his disciple much more continually and distinctly in our minds, than we do that of Ignatius. After his friend had left him, he was anxious to hear some tidings concerning his journey, and was shortly gratified in his wish. The Church of Philippi wrote to him, giving an account of his arrival there, and informing him that they had escorted him on his departure through Macedonia. Farther they knew not. This drew from him a letter, written both in a spirit and a style

truly Apostolic. It reminds us of the shorter and hortatory epistles of St. Paul, and is interesting, as giving us an insight into the state of this Church, which St. Paul himself had founded, and afterwards exhorted by letter. In one respect it was strongly contrasted with that of Smyrna. It was wealthy¹, and was vexed with the usual effects of wealth. In other respects it bore but too near a resemblance to the Asiatic Churches. The heretics of the day were assailing it². He sends them, according to their request, the letters of Ignatius, and promises to forward by his messenger their letter of congratulation to the Church of Antioch on the cessation of its persecution. In the close he desires them to inform him, as soon as ever they are certified, of the fate of Ignatius and his companions. The arrival of the remains of the martyr in Asia would, perhaps, be his earliest information upon this point.

Trajan's persecution spent its fury probably in the neighbourhood of his head-quarters; and all that Smyrna felt of it, if it felt at all, was but as the last faint wave driven by a distant storm. A long and deep peace, from without at least, now blest his Church. It had lasted about forty-three years, when Polycarp was called upon to exhibit on a more splendid stage the peculiar talent with which he was entrusted by his former conversation with the Apostles. He was most probably by this time the only one left of all that had enjoyed that privilege. His presence was required in the capital

¹ The love of money is several times reprobated.

² Pol. Ep. Philip. 7.

of the Empire¹. The leaders of the Gnostic heresy were busy, and but too successful in propagating their opinions there. At that early period the Scriptural canon could not have obtained among the generality that implicit and almost intuitively acknowledged authority, both as to contents and extent, which length of time has given it in these days. The bold heretic, therefore, who denied the authority or purity of the received books, and claimed Apostolical tradition for his own forgeries or corruptions by which he seconded his pernicious doctrines, was sure of finding followers from among that large crowd who are ignorant, fond of novelty, or prone to rebel against authority. Rome, the centre whence every thing, good or bad, flowed to the provinces, gave them a most dangerous position, together with extraordinary facilities. The Roman clergy, unaccustomed to the subtleties of these men, knew scarcely how to refute them, and when they were challenged for Apostolical tradition, could produce in their bishop only the tenth successor from the Apostles. The testimony of a hearer of the Apostles would, however, be decisive against them. But to this prime and indispensable quality Polycarp added a thorough knowledge of both the heresies and the sort of men. They had been long troubling Asia.

(A.D. 158.) The occasion must indeed have been pressing, which could have prevailed upon this apos-

¹ I have endeavoured to give the probable account of the cause of Polycarp's journey. Certainly the Paschal controversy needed nothing beyond an interchange of letters; as afterwards in the time of Polycrates, and Irenæus mentions it as incidental to the journey.

tolic man to quit his diocese, and now, that he must have been about his hundredth year, to undertake so long a journey, or perilous a voyage. Amid the regret at leaving his flock, and at the sad occasion which compelled him, he could, notwithstanding, heartily thank the Lord, that he had put into his hands a talent of such inestimable service to his Church; and fervently would he pray for grace and wisdom to use it to the very best account. The joy and satisfaction which his arrival diffused through the Roman Church must have been great. With what affectionate interest would they gaze upon this venerable old man, who had conversed with the forefather of their now lengthened line of bishops. The effect of his presence had not been miscalculated. Many returned from their heretical errors, upon his testifying to the doctrine of the Church, that it was the one and only truth which himself had received from the Apostles¹. One day he encountered the heresiarch Marcion, who, with unblushing effrontery, said, "Acknowledge ye us."—"I acknowledge the first-born of Satan," was the uncompromising answer of Polycarp². Many at this day would call such an answer uncharitable and unchristian-like. It would be well if such persons would take more trouble than they do in referring to the authentic documents of Christian charity. Had the notions, now so commonly affixed to that sacred term, prevailed in the early Church, how could Christian truth have come down to us in purity, if indeed it came down to us at

¹ Euseb. E. H. iv. 14.

² Ibid. from Irenæus.

all? Had the preachers of those days suffered their adversaries to go uncontradicted, if they had not set their faces against them as flint, their faith, which by their conduct they would have confessed to be indifferent, must have been lost. But they knew not that produce of our corrupt times, that disguised infidelity, which assumes the name of charity, but betrays its first principle, which is Christian faith: which has its foundation not in the Gospel, but in selfish vanity; which casts out fear indeed, as to the fear of God, but takes up in its place the fear of man; which seeks popularity, and accommodates itself to others in order to obtain in return accommodation for itself; which looks but to the body, and cares not for the soul. So far from joining in a work of Christian love with men who differed from them in essential doctrine, they would have denied that it could be a work of love; they would have asserted that it was just the contrary, countenancing, as it did, an indifference to the pure faith. Nor did they think that every one who chose to call himself Christian (and he might be Antichrist) was therefore to have his claim allowed. In those times of nakedness and the sword, a pure and stedfast faith was the only support; and that honourable title was significant indeed. False doctrine, false brethren, were regarded as far more dangerous adversaries to the Christian cause than the severest persecution: as a traitor within is worse than a foe without. We are told that Polycarp, whenever he heard false doctrine broached, would cry out, stop his ears, and say, "O glorious God, to what times hast thou reserved me, that I

should endure this?¹” So much wariness (says Irenæus, in comment upon the above anecdote of Marcion,) had the apostles and disciples, that they should not have communion, even as to speech, with any of the counterfeits of the truth; and this, he says, is the doctrine of St. Paul. It would have been very gratifying had we been assured that Marcion’s temporary return to the Church took place in consequence of this meeting.

But the necessity, in Polycarp’s mind, of a rigid and uncompromising assertion of the purity of the faith, is strikingly set forth by a beautiful example of charity and communion where the difference lay but in a matter of ritual observance. The Churches of Asia differed from the Western Churches with respect to the day of termination of the fast which introduced the festival of Easter. They ended it on the fourteenth day, which was that of the Jewish Passover; whereas the Western Churches continued it until the day of the resurrection, which day they always fixed on a Sunday, while the former party observed it on whatever day of the week it may fall according to the lunar course². Each side claimed apostolical authority for their usage—the former that of St. John, the latter of their predecessors³. This difference, which, within forty years after, very nearly produced a schism in the Church⁴, broke no bonds of love between Polycarp and the Roman Bishop Anicetus, the heads of the two parties at this day. So far from it, they partook together of the

¹ Euseb. E. H. v. 20. from a fragment of Irenæus.

² Ibid. 23.

³ Ibid. 24.

⁴ See the Life of Victor.

body and blood of the Lord, thus signifying, in the most solemn and distinct manner, their essential unity in the same body, and displaying their unfeigned love. In this rite too, Anicetus showed his deep sense of the character and services of his illustrious guest, by conceding to him, in his own Church, the post of consecrating the elements of the Eucharist. Here was, indeed, a proof of spiritual unity. An overbearing successor, the carnal Victor, could launch his thunder of excommunication to force a carnal unity. A few other, and still less important points of difference, were readily overlooked or adjusted between these faithful servants of the Prince of Peace. Having effected all the objects of his journey, Polycarp returned to Smyrna.

Here he continued his anxious watchfulness over the Church of God, both without and within the range of his diocese. He exhorted and confirmed the neighbouring Churches by his letters, and wrote even to individuals to advise and stimulate them¹. Nor did he look only to the generation which now filled his Church, but provided for that which was rising up. Perhaps he had found that the Church was placed at a great disadvantage before the eyes of the world, in its disputes with heretics, through the neglect of human learning. As long as the living testimony of a hearer of the Apostles was at hand, there was a short and decisive mode of refuting them, satisfactory to the most uninquiring. But when this failed, as it would shortly, through his own death, then those men must be met on their own ground.

¹ Euseb. E. H. v. 20.

Not only must the Scripture and written tradition of the Church be thoroughly studied, in order to convict them of adulteration, forgery, and false doctrine; but, in order to enter and assail them in their very camp, the heathen philosophy must be studied, whence they drew so largely for their specious and captivating tenets; the heathen dialectics must be taken up, by which they defended their systems, and warded off their adversaries, with a sophistry which, in vulgar eyes, gave them the victory over common sense. He had seen but too many examples of the advantage which the heretics thus obtained against truth, and his late visit to Rome had furnished one but too illustrious. The plain unsophisticated mind was in danger from the artifices of these men. Champions, therefore, must be raised up, who to the innocence of the dove should add the wisdom of the serpent. Such, perhaps, were the more than common views with which Polycarp entered upon the education of the youthful part of his flock¹; and he had begun it long before his journey to Rome would give the finishing stroke to his conviction of its necessity. The proof of this his work was given by Irenæus, who proceeding from this school, and armed at all points with divine and human learning, achieved once again the victory of Polycarp in the West, and left the Church, of all ages and countries, in possession of a magazine of weapons against future

¹ This supposition is drawn from the fragment of Irenæus in Euseb. H. E. v. 20., from the necessity of the times, and from the character of the work of Irenæus, the foundation of which must have been laid under Polycarp. Nor would he be singular: we know that similar schools existed at Rome and at Alexandria.

attacks from the same quarter. How the venerable teacher was honoured and beloved by such pupils as were not unworthy of him, is manifested in a beautiful passage of this disciple, where he affectingly calls to mind the days of his youth, and thankfully acknowledges the benefits both of mind and soul, which he derived from his apostolic master¹.

(A.D. 167.) Polycarp had now raised up witnesses to the truth, who could not only inform the Church of what he had heard in his conversation with John, and with those who had seen the Lord, but could also encounter the wily adversary of the faith as it is in Christ Jesus. For upwards of seventy years he had been teaching, comforting, admonishing, confuting. He had fought a good fight, and it pleased the Lord to withdraw him to his rest by such means too as should edify and encourage his flock to the end. The long peace which the Church had on the whole enjoyed since the days of Trajan was now at its close. A philosopher, in the person of Marcus Aurelius, filled the throne: and never has the Church had occasion to bless the rule of such a character. If new decrees against the Christians did not proceed from himself, he allowed them to proceed from the provincial governors²; and a loose rein was given to the horrible oppressions of shameless informers, and covetors of other men's goods, who openly exercised their robbery, and plundered the Christians by night and by day. The province of

¹ See Life of Irenæus.

² See the fragment of Melito's Apology in Euseb. E. H. iv. 26. It was presented three years after this.

Asia was especially visited with this affliction. A dreadful pestilence, which had pervaded the whole empire, and a dangerous war with the northern barbarians, soured the minds of men peculiarly at this season, and to plunder of property was now added attack upon life. It seems to have broken out into this full violence at Smyrna from its usual source, the games of the Amphitheatre¹. When the worst passions, both of cruelty and sensuality, had been roused by the detestable spectacles there exhibited, a single cry uttered against the Christians reminded every bosom that there was a body of men by whom this, and all its fondest enjoyments, were condemned, and the heathen's own conscience could not, but in a more or less degree, join their protest. Hence burst forth at once that hatred which longs to avenge loss of self-respect upon another's felt but not acknowledged superiority. It is the most deadly passion of which human nature is capable. In a crowd, pervaded by one common feeling, however little the occasion may concern it, a single voice touching that chord (by whom uttered nobody knows or enquires) will raise an unanimous shout to answer it. What wonder, then, if in the Amphitheatre a solitary cry of "Away with the Atheists," or "To the lion with the Christians," should produce a clamour, which the magistrate, even if unwilling to satisfy it, durst not resist. Thus the lives of a whole Church hung in jeopardy upon the breath of the most worthless individual. That of Smyrna now experienced the ex-

¹ This appears from the presence at Smyrna of the governor of Asia, and of the Asiarch, and from the answer of the latter, besides other more obscure hints.

treme misery of this hazardous situation. The populace proceeded to the most horrible excesses against its members. They were flayed alive with scourges, roasted with fire, given to be devoured by beasts, and subjected to the most ingenious tortures which human malice can suggest¹. But the cowardly cruelty of a populace, instead of admiring the fortitude of its victims, is but still farther enraged. It demands cries and groans, imprecations and entreaties, to acknowledge its power ; and when these are withheld, it imputes an insolent and traitorous resistance to its lordly tyranny. When, therefore, the patient endurance of a number of victims was crowned by the bold resolution of Germanicus, who forced the beasts upon himself, the multitude, quite confounded at this noble bearing of the Christians, burst into a cry of "Away with the Atheists. Let a search be made for Polycarp."

The aged bishop, on the first notice of what was going on, had determined to stand at his post. He was, however, afterwards prevailed upon to retire to a farm not far from the town. Here he remained a day and a night in continual prayer, and having seen in a dream his pillow on fire, foretold to his attendants the manner of his approaching death. The vigour of the search compelled him hence to another farm, where the confession of a slave, who was put on the rack, disclosed his hiding place. He was discovered by the police reclining in an upper chamber, late on the Friday evening. He might still have

¹ Henceforward this biography follows the authority of the letter of the Church of Smyrna on the martyrdom of Polycarp.

escaped along the roof, but instead of attempting this he cried, "The Lord's will be done," and went down stairs to his pursuers. He had done his duty in not tempting the Lord by a needless exposure of life, and was now set at liberty joyfully to welcome the death which was evidently ordained for him. His venerable appearance and calm composure struck them with shame and compunction, which would not be diminished, when, with the cheerful hospitality of a bishop, he ordered meat and drink, as much as they would, to be set before them. He required from them, in return, but the indulgence of an hour for prayer. They allowed him two; and, heathens though they were, heard him with admiration, and even sorrow for their sad duty, as he offered up his supplications for all with whom he had ever held intercourse, for small and great, noble and ignoble, and for the universal Church throughout the world. Having mounted him upon an ass, they were conducting him to the city, when he was met by the Irenarch Herod, with his father Nicetas. They took him up into their chariot, and immediately began to persuade him to save his life by sacrificing. But when they could not prevail, they turned him out so roughly, that he injured his leg in his descent. Yet he walked on cheerfully, as if nothing had happened, towards the Stadium.

As he entered, many of the faithful heard (as they assert) a voice from heaven, crying, "Be strong, and have courage¹, Polycarp." He here appeared at the tribunal of the Proconsul, who, as usual in such

¹ The words are in Deuteron. xxxi. 7.

cases, began with mildness to persuade him to comply. His note, however, grew more stern, as the conversation proceeded. "Swear by the fortune of Cæsar (he said); change your mind, and cry 'Away with the Atheists.'" Polycarp replied by a severe look at the crowd, and, waving his hand at them, and as if tossing back to them that exclamation, cried out, "Away with the Atheists," looking at the same time up to heaven with a deep groan. On the Proconsul still insisting, and saying, "Swear, and I will release you. Revile Christ." He answered, "Eighty and six years have I been serving him, and he hath done me no wrong. And how can I blaspheme my King, who hath brought me salvation?" Finding his firmness invincible, the Proconsul commanded the crier to proclaim, "Polycarp has confessed himself to be a Christian." On this the populace, composed of heathens and Jews, furiously cried out, "This is the teacher of impiety, the father of the Christians; the man who is for putting down our gods, and who is teaching many not to offer sacrifice or worship to the gods." The Asiarch Philip was urged by them to set a lion on Polycarp, which he refused, alleging that he had finished the games, so far as exposing to beasts was concerned, and that therefore he had it not in his power. The general cry then was that he should be burned; and the multitude, among whom the Jews, as usual, especially distinguished themselves, although it was their sabbath, hastily got together wood and fagots from the workshops and the baths. A pile was soon raised, and Polycarp placed in the midst of it.

All being ready, he stript himself for his last

struggle; but for a long time he was unable to unloose his sandals, from the interruption of the faithful, who eagerly ran up to touch the body of the holy martyr. When the fagots had been arranged around him¹, they were going to nail him to the stake; but he requested them to omit this part, saying, "Leave me as I am, for he that granteth me to endure the fire, will grant me to stand unmoved amid the pile without the security of your nails." They indulged him so far, as only to bind him. In this position he offered up the following prayer:—

O Lord God Almighty, Father of thy beloved and blessed Son Jesus Christ, through whom we receive the knowledge which telleth of thee, O God of angels, and powers, and of all the creation, and of all the family of the just, who live in thy presence: I bless thee that thou hast thought me worthy of this day and hour, so that I should be a partaker in the number of thy witnesses, in the cup of thy Christ, unto the resurrection of everlasting life, both of soul and body, in the incorruption of the Holy Spirit. Amongst whom may I be accepted before thee this day, through a fat and acceptable sacrifice, according as thou hast beforehand prepared, and manifested, and hast fulfilled, even thou, the unfailing and true God. On this account, and for all things also, I praise thee, I bless thee, I glorify thee, together with the everlasting and heavenly Jesus Christ, thy beloved Son: with whom, to thee and the Holy Spirit, be glory now and for ever. Amen.

¹ Hence in cruel mockery the martyrs were called *Sarmenticii* and *Semixii* Tertul. Apol. 50.

The fire was then lighted around him, and, when it had risen into a vast flame, bellying like a sail, it encircled the martyr as it were in a chamber of fire, where his body remained unconsumed, like gold in the furnace. At the same time an exquisite fragrance, as of frankincense and other spices, issued forth, to the great comfort and delight of his flock ¹. On seeing the resistance which his body offered to the flames, his impatient enemies ordered him to be run through with a sword. The quantity of blood issuing from the wound was so great as to quench the fire. Thus the body was preserved; but his followers were not to have the satisfaction of paying it the last honours. It was denied to them, owing to the malicious misrepresentations of the Jews, who suggested that the Christians would forsake their crucified God, and worship him. The Centurion placed it in the midst of the fire, and burnt it. The Church, however, gathered his bones, and reverently laid them up, as a treasure more precious than gems, in a place where they afterwards annually met, and celebrated this his birthday into everlasting life with joyful solemnities, in pious memory of those who had fought the good fight, and to the preparation and exercise of those who were to follow their example. This day was the 25th of April ².

Thus the prince of this world extinguished the

¹ The original gives these circumstances a miraculous air. They are readily accounted for. I have omitted, with Eusebius, the story of the dove, which, even if true, will not appear wonderful to such as have seen those birds fly swoop towards a fire, and out again.

² This is the day mentioned in the text of the Acts as it stands.

last lamp which had been kindled from the light of the living Apostles, and the Church lost a witness, who had upheld her claims in her most difficult trials. But he bequeathed to her, as we have already seen, a school of well-trained champions to continue the victorious fight against fraud and error. Every document that has come down to us is loud in his praise; and the affectionate testimony of his highly-gifted pupil, Irenæus, is well seconded by the internal evidence of his own admirable epistle. We there discover a spirit inspired with all the truth of the Gospel, as it is in Christ Jesus, frank and noble, and yet patient and gentle. He puts us in mind that he might often have seen Paul in his younger days, and perhaps Peter also; from both of whom he draws much more largely than from John his immediate instructor. But, in this particular instance, he might have adapted his style to the predilections of the members of a Pauline Church. This letter is the last of the works of the apostolic fathers, to which it forms a glorious crown. It was long read in the churches of Asia¹, and the time perhaps may not be far distant, when it shall once again be heard in his own Church, which still stands erect, though not undefiled in faith, amid the miserable wrecks of Christianity in that benighted region.

But his blood cried to heaven, and the Smyrniotes did not escape a dreadful retribution, for the injustice done to their fellow-citizen. Within ten years after his death an earthquake laid Smyrna, with all her glory, in heaps of ruin, and buried or swallowed

¹ Jerome's Catalogue.

up an immense number of her inhabitants. The Church was cheered and comforted by the Gospel of Christ, and the well-remembered lessons of their late pastor. The city was consoled with the harmonious and studied periods of the sophist Aristides. How strongly must have been exemplified then the all-efficiency of the comfort of heavenly wisdom, the utter nothingness of that of earthly! Perhaps many a heathen heart in that dark hour turned away in disgust from the pages of Aristides, and found comfort in the fold of Polycarp.

MARCION.

Elements of Heresy—Description of Pontus—Early life of Marcion—His removal to Rome, and adoption of heresy there—General view of the Gnostic heresy—Marcion's particular system—Character of his age—Propagation of his opinions through the provinces—Struggles of his conscience—Recantation and death.

IN our progress hitherto through the Church of God, we have met with true priests only, good and saintly men, who held and taught the truth of the Gospel in all sincerity. It has been but now and then that our glances have fallen upon men of a very different character. But that notice was faint and momentary. They appeared to us from a distant and obscure position, and little interrupted the enjoyment which was at hand. Now, however, we have reached the spot where they stand, and amid their foremost ranks encounter one who was more perniciously active than most of his fellows in corrupting the pure well of truth, and for the Gospel of salvation dealt forth the doctrine of damnation. We feel pain, but not

surprise, at this sad change. Has not every gift of God, both natural and spiritual, been abused by man? How, therefore, should the best and most perfect escape? How should not its very beauty and perfection hold out but the greater temptation to his perverse love of mutilation, just as the excellence of the workmanship of a building or statue serves but more violently to provoke the destructive hand of the barbarian, and the very preciousness of the wine suggests the avaricious fraud of the adulterator? Moreover, the sight of excellence always excites in our bosoms a rival spirit of conception, and in our foolish vanity we think, that, if we cannot surpass the original, we can improve it. Thus it is that man has ever thought that he can mend God's work. Ruin as our mind is of a higher nature, it can discern things far beyond its present attainment, and therefore no gift of God, adapted as it must ever be to our present state, will satisfy its shallow vanity. In the gift of his Gospel, God opens an unbounded view to us in certain directions, to which he bids us turn. But we are aware that in other points there must lie a vast extent of prospect, of which we see but the foreground. God has forbidden further speculation here: but man, forsooth, must needs know all, and the sin of the first man has been repeated by his descendants on every occasion of heavenly largess. Instead, therefore, of diligently following out the track opened to him, he will endeavour to unravel such as are still barred by obscurity. Continually baffled in reality he is only the more ardent and fertile in his conceptions, which he forms by borrowing from the beauty and magnificence of that

very prospect which God has allowed to him. A few superficial gazes upon this, instead of inviting him to go into its glorious and unbounded detail, only tempt him to explore in the other quarter, in which he works like the miner in a barren rock, who is however incited by the vivid conception which he has derived from the richness of the veins which have been laid open to his eyes elsewhere. Thus, instead of a ministration of unfailing comfort, of bright and certain hope, of high and noble aspiration, the Gospel became, in the minds of some perverse men, the incitement to vague, uneasy, and heartless speculation, the stimulant to thankless vanity. Nor did their selfish views concern only the honour of God. The welfare of fellow-man was also affected by them. Vanity would lead these men beyond the solitude of their study, and make them seek a troop of admiring followers; and the love of power would be gratified, if they set themselves up as the peculiar dispensers of the most precious gift of God, by vindicating it to themselves (universally though it had been given), and impressing upon it the marks of their own invention and manufacture.

Through a course of such reflection we are led to consider the character of Marcion, the best known if not the most famous, heresiarch of the days of the early Church. His native country was Pontus, a province which gave early and cordial reception to the Gospel¹, and had well contributed to man's bodily health in its famous physician Heraclides, long before it more than annulled that claim to our

1 Ep. Peter.

praise by producing this grand corrupter of spiritual health. The seaport of Sinope, a colony from Miletus, which had already illustrated its Ionian descent by giving to philosophy Diogenes the Cynic, was his birthplace. Thus he was born and brought up amidst Greek civilization, and his history shows that he made but too effectual an use of so great an advantage. Yet the impetuous Tertullian, in one of his fits of declamatory invective, has taken advantage of the vague application of the name of his country, which might be applied to all the coast of the Euxine, to pour upon it in one foul stream all that had ever been said in disfavour of the neighbourhood of that sea, by a succession of writers down from Herodotus to Ovid, who have complained of its barbarous inhabitants, related its monstrous legends, or described its rigid climate. "Barbarous and gloomy (he proceeds to say) as all about Pontus is, there is nothing more barbarous and gloomy than that Marcion should have been born there—more savage than a Scythian, more unsettled than a Hamaxobian¹, more uncouth than a Messageta, more daring than an Amazonian, more obscure than fog, more cold than winter, more brittle than ice, more deceitful than the Ister, more precipitous than the Caucasus²." The passage, of which this is but a part, is far more characteristic of its writer, than true of Marcion. Tertullian commits the error of

¹ Who led a gipsy life, moving from pasture to pasture in a waggon.

² Adv. Marcion i. 1. It has been imitated with more will than power by Jerome, in the opening of his very vulgar invective against Vigilantius, appended to his letter to Riparius, Epp. 53.

cutting down his own vineyard at the very outset : for how could the man have obtained such celebrity as to have provoked his long and elaborate treatise, had God so placed and endowed him ? But the sober fact is the contrary to this rhetorical flourish, and makes the case of Marcion one of very melancholy instruction. God had given him many and excellent gifts to account for. Not only was his birthplace able to afford him a good literary education, but his father was bishop of the city, and in high repute, both for his orthodox doctrine, and exemplary practice¹. If Marcion deserved the title of sailor², or skipper³, and gave Tertullian an opportunity to taunt him with jokes drawn from the smuggler's trade⁴, it was in having a share in the management of the ship of the Church of that populous seaport, rather than from having ever engaged in the prevailing occupation of his birthplace. In so pure an occupation, and under such good inspection, he grew up in holy living. But his strict habits degenerated into the will-worship of the sour austerity⁵ which seems to have been prevalent in his country, even among the orthodox⁶. Probably here we detect the first tokens of that spirit which led him to the adoption of his pernicious errors. Few, if any, persons

¹ Epiphan. lib. i. Hær. 42. 1.

² Rhodon. ap. Euseb. H. E. v. 13.

³ Tertull. adv. Marcion, i. 18.

⁴ Ib. v. 1.

⁵ I omit the scandalous anecdote told by Epiphanius, as inconsistent with his own account, and unmentioned by earlier writers, who would gladly have laid hold of it. The case is discussed at length in Lardner, vol. ix. p. 362.

⁶ See the subject of Dionysius's letter to Palma, in Euseb. iv. 23.

can support the irksomeness and loneliness to which strict fasting and other austere practices compel a man, unless they possess minds sustained in activity by habits of learned research, or by the powers of intent speculation or fertile imagination. Where these exist, the privations of the body are little considered. But the abundant leisure which such privations afford to the working of the mind, together with the effect which they have upon it in giving an edge to its acuteness, and free exercise to all its powers, aggravates the previous disposition, at the same time that all its wild vagaries are daily less and less restrained by the presence of that good common sense and healthy judgment which can only be maintained by outward intercourse with men and things. Thus, the same habits which gave birth to the wild mythology of the monks of later days, were among the causes of the monstrous systems of the earlier heretics. Men, in such a temper, not only readily quarrel with all established systems, because they are so unlike their own ideal structures, and will not afford them that despotic rule which they bear in the creations of their own minds, but their uninterrupted contemplation of self produces the natural progeny of selfishness, vanity, spiritual pride, lust of power. If they be not allowed by their times to find room for the exercise of these passions, in becoming the founders of monastic orders, or in filling some other influential station in the Church, they become schismatics like Tertullian, or heretics like Marcion. They are affecting examples of the manner in which the height of human wisdom becomes the depth of spiritual folly.

(A.D. 142.) Unfortunately for Marcion, the heresies already existent in his day were as closely associated with ascetism in a pure mind, as with recklessness and uncleanness of living in an impure; and they flattered the spiritual pride of the one, quite as much as they encouraged the sensual appetite of the other. It was therefore, perhaps, in a state of unquiet and dissatisfaction, preparatory to his heretical career, that he left his aged father (not, alas! to follow Christ), and quitted his native shore. He betook himself to Rome, the common centre of congregation to all the restless and dissatisfied spirits of the provinces. The episcopal chair had just become vacant by the death of Hyginus, and the choice of his successor was in anxious suspense. Marcion's charity or ambition moved him to give a liberal contribution to the common chest of that Church¹, which, employing its talent of superior wealth in relieving the necessities of its poorer sisters², had a claim even upon the stranger. If, therefore, the latter were the motive, it would escape suspicion even at such a time. This donation, probably, seconded a high recommendation, both from the character of his father, his own well-known piety and attainments, and some agreeable or commanding quality, which gave him great personal influence, and afterwards enabled him to found a sect, which was spread through the empire. The favourable reception which he experienced brought the chair itself within the scope of his ambitious views. The election of

¹ I have combined the statement of Epiphanius with that of Tertullian *adv. Marcion*. iv. 4. *de Præser. Hæret.* 30.

² See *Life of Dionysius of Corinth*.

Pius put an end to them, and revealed to the world the true character of Marcion. His disappointment at the moment might have been but slight, and yet might lay the train to his rupture with the Church. He was already infected with the heretical spirit, though not with its doctrine, and was ill prepared to acknowledge a superior after the enjoyment of the Presbyterian equality, which he found on his arrival. The new bishop also might have been one whom Marcion had overlooked, because he did not see him at the head of a troop of admiring partizans, which was probably his own situation; and was ignorant of the deep, and general, though silent approval, which sometimes raises unpretending men, by a sudden burst, to the height of their merits. Nor would the Roman clergy be long in discovering that Marcion pursued a practice, namely, that of sour austerity, to which their Church was exceedingly averse¹, and he might have received from them a slight similar to that which afterwards had so unfortunate an effect upon Tertullian.

His seducer was close at hand, to take advantage of this temper of mind. Cerdo, a Syrian, had come to Rome during the late episcopate², and had been propagating there his impious extravagancies. Blinded by the passion of the moment, as well as predisposed by habits, Marcion threw himself into this trap of Satan, never to be extricated, but at his last hour, if indeed then. So apt a scholar was he, that he soon surpassed his master, whose system has since

¹ See Tertull. de Pudicit.

² Epiphan. i. Hær. 41. Iren. adv. Hær. i. 28.

been regarded in a mere secondary light, as the basis on which Marcion reared his too celebrated structure. This it is now necessary to describe, and the task is at once difficult to the understanding and painful to the feelings.

The origin of the class of opinions which he espoused, and which went under the general name of the Gnostic heresy, is involved in impenetrable obscurity. The Fathers are unanimous in ascribing it to the Greek philosophy; and when we consider what was likely to result from the first contact of that system with Christianity in the heart and head of man, we shall see good reason to acquiesce in a great measure with their opinion. The earliest speculators on the creation of the world were the Asiatic Greeks of the Ionian school. But as they never contemplated the attributes of the Creator, they come not into question. But even Plato, who ascribed perfect goodness to God, never considered the fundamental question of the Gnostic, "Whence comes evil?" Nor was it ever a serious question in Greek philosophy, any more than the attributes of the Deity, which they contented themselves with allowing in idle speculation, and in mere terms, without drawing from them any inference which might affect themselves and fellow-men¹. But when, amid the systems from which new were continually being formed by the spirit of Eclecticism, Christianity made its appearance on philosophic ground, and, while it engaged attention with the grandeur of its features, and beauty

¹ See the fragments of Cleanthes, preserved by Clem. Alex. Protrept 72. and Strom. v. 111.

and truth of its precepts, laid down the attributes of God not only distinctly, but also as fundamental to the system, as vitally concerning man, then arose a compound system, differing essentially from all its philosophic predecessors. The main stress was laid upon God's attributes, while the question of the early philosophy on the subject of the creation was revived. This immediately gave birth to the grand question of the origin of evil, and of its companion, if indeed it be not essentially one and the same, of the connexion of spirit with matter. The result was one of those portentous errors into which the human mind must ever fall, when it follows the track of abstract reason without staying to appeal to its own intuitive notions and instincts. In the depth of his abstraction man beheld in God an impassible, unchangeable, perfect, good, everlasting being. But when he looked upon the world before him, he beheld all full of misery and sin, all fleeting, all imperfect, all therefore evil, from the flesh and blood which inclosed his soul, to the stars in the heaven, which rose and set in continual change. How could such a world be the product of such a being¹? To reconcile the contradiction, he conceived it to be the work of an inferior being. The predecessors of Cerdo had interposed a series of beings, which Valentinus called *Æons*, Basilides termed angels, between the supreme God and the Creator. Marcion, however, discarded these, as only putting the difficulty at a greater distance, but not removing it, and abruptly proposed

¹ The heretics used to quote on this point Luke vi. 43, 44. Vid. Tertull. adv. Marcion. i. 2.

two gods ; a good and unknown, and a just and known : the former the father of Jesus, the latter the author of the law and inspirer of the prophets¹. These grand propositions, with some others, Marcion took as the base of his system.

His supreme God, having the sole moral attribute of good, was, in effect, the god of Epicurus². The other, who was the Demiurge, or Creator, and inferior, had the attribute of justice, with which term, implying as it does the giving of pain, Marcion smoothed the abruptness of calling him evil in downright terms³. He considered him liable to passion⁴, and also ignorant of the existence of his superior⁵. This was necessarily the God of the Old Testament, the deliverer of the carnal law and inspirer of the prophets, from one of whom Marcion and the rest would quote for their opinions his own words, " I . . . create evil⁶." To each of these beings belonged his Christ : to the first, Jesus, who came to deliver man from the thralldom of the Demiurge : to the second, the Christ who was yet to come, to collect the Jews from their dispersion⁷. But, as the human body was the work of the Demiurge, this could never have been really assumed by Jesus, but only apparently.

¹ See Irenæus, adv. Hær. i. 28. Epiphan. i. Hær. 41.

² Tertull. adv. Marcion, i. 5. 25, &c. Irenæus, iii. 24. 2.

³ I imagine that Irenæus states the meaning, and not the terms, of Marcion.

⁴ Ibid. 25.

⁵ Ibid. iii. 22, &c.

⁶ Isai. xlv. 7. Epiphanius, 42, 3. says, Marcion added a third principle. Theodoret mentions four. Hæret. Fab. i. 24. But I have thought proper to adhere to Irenæus and Tertullian, who in adv. Marc. i. 15. however, makes a third by his own deduction.

⁷ Tertull. adv. Marcion. iii. 21.

It was, therefore, merely a phantom which men beheld upon the cross¹. As the prophets too were (as under the law) ministers to the Demiurge, their prophecies did not refer to Jesus, who came into the world without any such notice², and, bringing a new revelation from the supreme and unknown God, suddenly descended into Capernaum in the fifteenth year of Tiberius³. We must here be content with sketching out a few of his doctrines consequent on such a system of extravagant impiety.

1. The body, being the work of the Demiurge, was not to be resumed after death, but perished everlastingly. Salvation belonged to the soul only⁴.

2. The whole scheme of prophecy was rejected, together with that of sacrifice, and the Scripture of the Old Testament set aside.

3. The cardinal doctrine of the atonement was of course discarded.

4. Marriage, as doing the work of the Demiurge, in continuing the human body, was condemned equally with fornication. Marcion would neither baptize, nor admit to the communion of his eucharist, any who persisted in that state⁵.

5. He maintained the necessity of keeping the body in subjection, not from any motive of love towards God, but of spite to its evil maker⁶. Hence also they were forward to expose it to martyr-

¹ Id. de carne Christi, i. 5. adv. Marcion. iv. 8. Clem. Alex. Strom. iii. 102.

² Id. adv. Marcion. iii. 1—5.

³ Ibid. iv. 7.

⁴ Tertull. adv. Marcion. i. 7. 24. Clem. Alex. Strom. iii. 48. &c.

⁵ Ibid. i. 24. 29. iv. 3. 34, &c.

⁶ Clem. Alex. Strom. iii. 25. Tertull. adv. Marcion. i. 27.

dom¹; a thing from which the Gnostics generally shrunk².

That a heathen who met with Christianity among other systems around him, and treated it with an eclectic spirit, as merely one of them, should compose such a tissue of extravagances, would be no cause for wonder. But that a man carefully trained up in the Gospel by one of its chief ministers, and him his father, should pile up such a heap of blasphemous absurdity, may well raise our astonishment. It shows how far vanity, a prying curiosity, a perverse disposition, will carry the understanding away from God into the regions of folly, and proves that when our passions once lead us to tamper with divine truth, there is no power of stopping at any predetermined point. On we must go to the end of the course, unless the mercy of God intervene to arrest our race. One fundamental truth abandoned leaves the edifice in ruins, and a basis of falsehood can be built upon only with falsehood. Marcion could not stay even here. His false doctrine required a false Scripture to support it. He therefore forged a Gospel, which he took entirely from St. Luke's, omitting of course the two first chapters, and all other passages which he could not adapt to his system³. Of the epistles he retained those of Paul only, and even then rejected those to Timothy and Titus⁴,

¹ Euseb. E. H. v. 16. sub fin. Clem. Alex. Strom. iv. 17.

² Clem. Alex. ib. 16. Tertull. c. Gnosticos.

³ Epiphani. i. Hær. lxii. 9, &c. Tertull. adv. Marcion. v.

⁴ Ib. Of course, the Ep. Hebrews was among the rejected. But he would have some support within the Church against its being Paul's.

which of course underwent the process of alteration and mutilation, before they would serve his purpose, and still he was obliged to resort to the most perverse and quibbling interpretations. To crown the whole, he composed a book called *Antitheses*, or *Contradictions*, to show the opposition between the Law and the Gospel¹.

Brief as this notice of Marcion's tenets is, it is sufficient for our purpose of showing the man, and of taking warning from his folly. The example is the more awful, inasmuch as he was not only strict, but severe in his moral practice. His errors did not arise from the wilful blindness of a heart devoted to the enjoyment of the world, nor from the weakness of understanding which cannot regulate a restless though commonplace imagination. He was professedly at war with the world, as with an intolerable evil, and the meanness of his intellect is disproved, by the wide and powerful influence which he obtained. But their source lay in a spirit, which was never more proud and uncomplying, than when it was rolling in the voluntary humility of dust and ashes. He must revenge a slight: he must gratify his ambition: and neither the doctrine of Christ, nor the word of God, were allowed to stand in his way. On the contrary, they were used as instruments of his warfare against the Church, after he had profanely fashioned them into weapons of offence, and turned the crook into a sword. When a man begins to adulterate the word of God, he is far gone indeed on the road of perdition. The Holy Spirit has abandoned him. How

¹ Tertull. adv. Marcion. i. 19. iv. 1, &c.

careful, then, should we be of the treatment which we offer to it. And how many vile passions are ever ready in prompting us, if not with Marcion to adulterate the text, yet with him to falsify the meaning. Vain ignorance will boldly expound as it listeth, uncharitableness will wrest a text and point it against an adversary, factious unfairness will not scruple to divest it of all meaning, so that it shall not oppose its cause, or will affix a wrong meaning, if that will hurt his opponent's argument; and love of the world will bury its uncompromising spirit under a thick cloak of sophistical comment. Alas! what continual obstacles put themselves in the way of our taking up the sacred text with all seriousness and sincerity. The word is holy, and we are unholy. Rebuke is mixed with comfort, and we are too apt to overlook the former, which summons to self-examination, and make the most of the latter, which may minister to our self-satisfaction. Humility, patience, singleness of heart, cheerful and unreserved surrender of both feeling and understanding to the unsearchable but affecting mysteries of the Gospel, must be in the mind of that reader, who would keep himself clear from all taint of the spirit of Marcion.

He found plenty of materials for his work of heresy. Valentinus and Basilides had, for some time, been preparing the soil¹ by extravagances which he could not outdo, but may prune with advantage. The evil tree in consequence produced much more fruit, and he soon found himself seated on the bad eminence of Prince of Heresiarchs. He

¹ Clem. Alex. Strom. vii. 106, 107, 108.

kept his station at Rome, and propagated thence his opinions into the provinces, where they took root deep and wide. Many, perhaps, will wonder how such monstrous systems could gain believers, even if they had found authors. But we must remember the spirit of the age in which they were broached. Civilization had long turned the goal in its course, and the public mind was fast recurring to a second childhood. The indolence and imbecility caused by long continued wealth and ease had come on. The mind had not patience to go into any depth of thought, nor vigour to follow any flight of original imagination. Instead of sound judgment and sterling sense, there was an infantine restlessness, a love of novelty and excitement, an indiscriminating curiosity. In the place of healthy feelings, there was morbid sentiment: and the clear and strong conception of an earlier stage was succeeded by a dreaminess, which mistook vagueness for copiousness, indistinctness for grandeur, and a mere patchwork of tawdry colours for a beautiful picture. The eye of the mind, dim with age, saw all things through a mist, and mystery, not clearness, was best adapted to its perceptions. The quantity of mental riches bequeathed by their forefathers only furthered the degeneracy. Amid the abundance the mind became indiscriminate in its judgment, and first the necessity, and then the exertion, of drawing from original sources quite ceased. Will the degenerate inhabitant of Palmyra go to the mountain and hew stone, when he can construct his miserable cabin from fragments of friezes, pillars, and capitals, which the gorgeous remnants of ancient grandeur supply to hand? Such a period, therefore,

is characterized by a wildness of imagination without originality, and its works, instead of being creations, are pieces of patchwork, put together with a hasty and barbarous hand. They are the composition of confused memory, rather than of clear conception. Carrying this in our mind, we shall no longer wonder at the strong attraction on the minds of the multitude exercised by the incongruous mass of Gnosticism, which plundered every accessible quarter for its materials. The mythology of the Greek poets, the speculations of the Greek philosophers, the puerile inventions of the Jewish Rabbis, the wild fancies of the Orientals, were blended in various proportions into manifold but similar systems. Perhaps an observant and commanding view cast at the present state of civilization, at the nature of the prevailing literature, and at the position of the Church, may descry some danger impending over the truth from a similar quarter.

(A.D. 160.) But Marcion had once known the truth in all its purity, and its force could not but occasionally revive and smite his conscience, with a blow violent enough to stagger, though not to convince. He had begun indeed cautiously, and had proceeded some way in corrupting the brethren, before he was excommunicated, and, in token of utter separation, his money, which he had contributed to the Church, returned to him as an accursed thing¹. Yet he seems for some time to have proceeded with a vacillating step, and even to have apparently rejoined the Church more than once, until the door

¹ Tertull. de Præser. Hæret. 30. adv. Marcion. iv. 4.

was finally shut upon his incorrigible perverseness. Several celebrated men came to Rome during this early part of his career, and may have slackened its speed by the check of their name and testimony. Justin, the martyr, arrived not very long after his first broaching of his heresy at Rome, and found him active in the dissemination of his opinions, and yet cautious¹, according to the manner of heretics, who kept their most startling doctrines out of immediate sight, but effectually infused them into the mind by raising curious questions, and propounding doubts and queries, which their hearers could not answer. Meanwhile the terms employed by the orthodox were adhered to, while their meaning was artfully perverted; and the stratagem was helped on by a loud and continued outcry against the exclusive and uncharitable conduct of the orthodox, who refused their communion, and branded them with the name of heretics, though they professed the same doctrine². By such means, he drew over great numbers to his side, and in the course of twenty years had become so notorious and formidable, that he was thought then, and long after, the most proper mark whereat to aim all the weapons of offence and defence, in the cause of the truth. The attack began early in the day by Justin Martyr—was continued by such famous champions as Dionysius of Corinth, Theophilus of Antioch, Irenæus, and Tertullian. Then it was that Polycarp encountered him at Rome, and met his salutation with a rebuff, which, coming from the disciple of an Apostle, should have recalled him

¹ Justin. *Apol.* i. 26. 28.

² Irenæus iii. 15. Ed. Grabe.

to a sound mind. It would either have that effect, or the very opposite. Such a renunciation of all fellowship with him by such a man would either set him to the task of a vigorous self-examination, and thus bring him to a penitent sense of his error, or might rouse an indignant feeling, and so confirm him in it. Unfortunately for him, it little signifies whether of these two was the result, since if he now made one of those returns which Tertullian mentions, it was faint and brief, and perhaps his course became more violent for the check, when the dam was removed. Thus two martyrs had expended in vain upon him the shafts of truth, both in letter and in person. But he who denied the sufferings of the Son of God, was not likely to be permanently moved by any efforts of his faithful servants.

After having effectually done his work of mischief at Rome, he made a tour of the provinces¹, and perhaps on the track of the apostle of the truth, sowing his tares, where the other with so much labour had sown his wheat. But if the extent of his journey be measured by the space over which his opinions spread, he would go far beyond the farthest bound of St. Paul's mission, and might have added the entire extent of another apostle's to it. His opinions had, no doubt, preceded him to most places, and he came to show himself in triumph to deluded congregations, and set the last seal upon their error. The highly civilized state of the empire gave great facilities to

¹ The time is uncertain. The fact itself is deduced from the consequences, and such expressions as "Hamaxobio instabilion" (quoted above), may allude to it.

the wide spreading of his heresy. Every spot was now accessible, well known, full of traffick. Deserts, famous or rather infamous, of yore, were covered with farms, sands with cornfields, and there were as many cities as there had formerly been cabins. The islands were no longer solitary places for exile, and their rocks had lost their terrors. Every where was habitation, every where population, every where the security of government, every where life. War, famine, pestilence, and earthquakes, seemed insufficient checks to a population which was fast outgrowing the means of subsistence¹. The contrast which the eastern portion of the empire now presents to this description, places this tour of Marcion and his opinions in a most interesting but awful light. It may be traced to that spiritual and moral disunion, which heresy and schism produced. The Mahomedan superstition found the Christian mind as broken, divided, perplexed, corrupted, and ready for its yoke, as its policy and arms found the public spirit disunited and degenerate. Religious faction did its own work, and (as it ever will) that of civil faction too. Amid the exulting cry of "Tut! we shall never be moved," which is raised upon every review of our present high and wide civilization, the man of cool reflection will ponder upon that of former days, and ask of himself why its place is no longer to be found. He will pray to God to grant to his country religious union, without which moral and political union are but as ropes of sand, and exist but in name.

¹ Tertull. de Anima. 30.

In the fatal progress of his opinions, Marcion laid waste the vineyard of the Church far and wide. The same speedy communication which had carried the truth into regions wide apart, was full as accommodating to the conveyance of error. And as the latter is more congenial to the corrupt mind of man, its reception was still more hearty and general. On reading the list of countries in which Epiphanius knew them to be maintained two centuries after this, we are painfully surprised at their extent and permanence. They still remained fixed in the heart of the empire at Rome, and were found not only in Italy, Syria, Palestine, Cyprus, Lower Egypt, but also in the less accessible regions of the Thebaid, Arabia, and Persia¹. How many happy and flourishing Churches thus lost their peace, never perhaps to recover it again! So much, and such irreparable mischief, may come from the reckless hand of one man. It would have been interesting if we had been told whether among other places he revisited his native town, and ventured to ravage the flock which his father had tended. That aged servant of the Lord would in all probability have gone to his rest before his son's return. But his successor would be there, to warn him away in his name; and Presbyters, Marcion's contemporaries, would be there to remind him of the solemn charge which they had received to maintain the truth against the pernicious errors which his son was propagating. They would appeal to his filial affection, to his filial duty, to his

¹ Epiphan. lib. i. Hær. 42. 1. See too Theodoret, Hæret. Fab. i. 24.

understanding, to his former conversation among them, to the Holy Scripture, and press their argument home with a closeness which he would be unwilling to encounter. Even the mute and lifeless forms of our native spot find a tongue wherewith to congratulate or renounce us, to give us joy or sorrow, according as our conscience is clean or defiled. How different from those reminiscences which Irenæus has so beautifully detailed of the blessed Polycarp, would be those which this heresiarch entertained of his apostolical father. They must have been full of rebuke to him in his most confident moments. He durst not have shown himself openly in his native city.

The fifth bishop (reckoning inclusively from Hyginus) was now presiding over the Romish Church, when we find Marcion again at Rome, during the episcopate of Eleutherus¹. Thus the public life of this heresiarch was permitted by the Providence of this world of trial to include the ministry of five strenuous upholders of the truth in the most important station of the empire. It is a general example of what is not uncommon in daily life, where we behold the good and profitable rapidly succeeding each other in short careers, while the bad and worthless see extraordinary length of days. Where would be the proof to our wisdom and faith, did not such things happen? Marcion had returned from his series of provincial triumphs, but with the retrospect of his labours had he the heavenly satisfaction which was experienced, on his arrival at the capital,

¹ Tertull. Præser. Hær. 30.

by the apostle of the Gentiles? He might reflect, with the feverish flush of vanity upon his cheek, on the unbounded popularity which had attended his march, the noisy applause might be ringing in his ears, all that man might wish from man might have been his reward. But where was the clear conscience before God? Where was the comfortable assurance that he had sown in the Lord? Was there no faltering, when alone in the presence of God, he invoked a blessing upon his labours? Did he fearlessly open before Him every depth of his heart, and jealously examine by his revealed word the doctrine which he had preached? He could not, and he did not. So blind is man, that he may maintain a falsehood with an undisturbed conscience, by keeping it out of sight in his prayers. But he durst not bring it to the light of God's truth; he is conscious that it cannot abide the test. He durst not, therefore, even name it, much less beg a blessing upon it. Here was the misery of this heresiarch, here was the difference to this popular preacher, between the public assembly and the secret chamber. As long as he contradicted man only, he could stand up boldly. None could deny the existence of evil, and on this general principle he took up his ground. Here he intrenched himself as in a citadel. His opponents may destroy his outworks, but he could laugh at them, and even throw bread out to show that he was not starving. The very shifts to which he was driven for defence increased his artfulness and audacity, while it blunted his feeling of shame and sense of absurdity. In the last extremity the imperfection of human language would always afford

him a loophole to escape from a pressing truth, and with the rest of his kind, he would resort to the most tortuous subtilties, to the most minute and captious cavillings. Truly pitiable was this his state of mind. The intellect is degraded when it is forced to obey a headstrong will, and, instead of holding its royal and commanding employment, is put to slavish work : when instead of nobly winning truth after truth, in open field, it is set like a skulking assassin to aim secretly against the truth, and when instead of being master of the house, and ordering all the other faculties to their work, it is the slavish spy to the lawless banditti who have gained possession. The feelings are sore and morbid, and, now deprest by the misgivings which are the avenging fury of the adoption of error, now stung by rebuffs, now kindled to madness by indignities, have no rest. Thus the head becomes cunning and fraudulent, the heart callous and malignant. But when Marcion's conscience told him that he was contradicting God also, where was his boldness, and how much more miserable still was his condition. In despite of the most hearty good will to believe in his insane speculations, man cannot effectually exclude the voice of nature. The goodness and beauty of this universal frame, the heavens, with the all-cheering and all-nurturing sun by day, and with their glowing moon and stars by night, the delicious breezes, the glory and fragrance of the flowers of the field, the strength of the hills, the enjoyment of the infinite variety of animals, which draw it each from some peculiar source, most cunningly contrived to supply it in the most effectual manner,—these cannot but at times prevail over the

most sour and perverted mind, and make it confess that the Maker of this world is a good God ¹. Marcion could not exclude, any more than Valentinus ², and his own instructor Cerdo ³ before him, this occasional conviction. How, in such a moment, could he stand before God with his blasphemy? How could he dare to rob Him of the glory of the exhibition of such goodness, and ascribe it to an evil agent? How could he open his heart to the Supreme God, and yet hold back this confession? He would feel himself compelled either to make it, or desist from prayer. And if he made it to God, then he must make it before man, whom he had been so long and unweariedly endeavouring to deceive. Here began a dreadful struggle in his mind. Shall he confess himself in the wrong before such numbers, who throughout and beyond the empire implicitly believed in him, and looked up to him with such reverence as an Apostle of the true God, or shall he abandon God? Sophistry could no longer disguise the alternative, and pride and shame at last yielded. He confessed his error, and entreated readmission into the Church. But he had done this at least once before, and a simple recantation would have been but very inadequate amends for so much and so long-continued mischief. The condition, therefore, was imposed that he should, for the future, do all in his power to bring back those whom he had

¹ See a beautiful passage to this effect in Tertull. adv. Marcion. i. 13, 14.

² Tertull. Præser. Hær. 30.

³ Irenæus iii. 4. (Ed. Grabe.)

led astray¹. But the view of the mischief which he had done must have been most appalling, now that he had returned to his senses. It must have been like the sight of his slaughtered children to him who has suddenly recovered his sanity after committing the horrible murder. How utterly inefficacious would be the utmost that he could do, through the longest life that nature would allow, after such wide destruction. Churches ravaged, souls lost, had been the work of his hand through every quarter of the civilized globe. And yet the reparation of his mischief at Rome alone, even could he undo as fast as he had done, would require more than now was likely to remain of life. How was he then to satisfy the cries of "Come and save us, thou that hast ruined us," which poured in from Alexandria, from Antioch, from Ctesiphon, and from every scene of his past labours? Every day, while brooding over this miserable spectacle to his mind, numbers of his various congregations would perhaps arrive, and inform him of their flourishing condition, and after they had thus added to the reproaches of his own mind, they would add their own, loud and bitter, when they learned from him the news of his recantation. Then, when after long preparation through prayer, he had summoned sufficient fortitude, and went forth upon his new mission, how intolerable must have been the anguish! He had not only to endure the altered and astonished looks of his former flock, to experience rudeness for respect, to listen to

¹ Tertull. Præser. Hær. 30.

the angry denunciations of the pride, the shrieking expostulations of the terror of the deluded, not only to have his feelings thus lacerated, but his understanding also was put to the rack. He now found how much more easy it is to perplex with doubts than to convince with truths ; and the minds over which he had formerly gained dominion would be of such a nature as to refuse all direct entrance to truth. They had been originally weak, so as easily to have been perverted by him, or had been already crooked so as immediately to have accepted his depraved doctrine. And now when he came with plain and straight argument, it could not enter the tortuous channel of the understanding. His own sophistries were retorted upon him, which he found it much more difficult to refute than to invent. The captious cavil, the unprincipled quibble, the reckless assertion or denial, which were once his own arms, now turned aside the direction of every thrust which he made, and he found that the scholar was not below his master. He could not plant the living word in a soil which he had purposely disqualified for it, he could not unravel the web which he had entangled with such studied intricacy. He could not impress minds with his former authority, when they knew not whether he might not change his opinions to-morrow. Nor could he at first wield with much effect the direct and weighty blows of the sword of the Gospel, whose hand had been so long accustomed to the shifts and elusions of the fencing-school. If any thing remained of his intellectual pride, it would have been purged away in this severe trial. With truth on his side, he was balked, de-

riden, insulted, by men whom he himself had taught to contend against the truth. Compared with this, what recked he of the terms—weathercock, apostate, timeserver, dotard, and all the rest of the opprobrious names which they heaped upon him? He now experienced the awful penalty of abused talents. He, in the pride of his heart, had turned them to instruments of mischief; and they had done his work so effectually, that the mightiest and longest exertion could never undo it. His heart was changed, and his hand was changed. But its pernicious work had gone beyond the reach of alteration. It was now deep in tens of thousands of hearts, into which he never could penetrate. It was now pushing its course into a generation, which would be in its vigour, when himself was in the grave. Alas! it is not the past alone which stings with anguish the bosom of the penitent, but the future too; and even with sharper pangs in proportion as the fruit of sin is more bitter than the seed, as the dread of evil to come more painful than the experience of that which has come; and, as the forgiveness of guilt seems more attainable where the extent of that guilt is definite, than where it is indefinite. It is painful to pursue further the process of the penitence of this brokenhearted man. Before he could make any sensible progress in his work of reparation, the Lord was pleased to remove him from this world. Little more, perhaps, than a few weeks were allowed for his undoing the mischief of at least forty years¹.

¹ He seems to have died under the episcopate of Eleutherus, at Rome, which began thirty-five years after the death of Hyginus. See Tertull. Præser. Hæc. 30.

But we may charitably hope that the will was taken for the deed, and that his long-abandoned Master did not abandon him, after he had once set his face steadily towards a return into the only paths of spiritual pleasantness.

JUSTIN MARTYR.

Interesting view now opened—Birth, and scene of the early years of Justin—Moral character of his times—Early studies—Preparatory causes of his conversion—Immediate cause—His hortatory address to the Greeks—Arrival at Rome—Writings against the heretics—His first Apology—Light in which we ought to view it—Abode at Ephesus, and dialogue held there with Trypho the Jew—Incompetency of the early Fathers to such a dispute—Return to Rome—Enmity of Aurelius to Christianity—Persecution set on foot by him—Justin's second Apology—Hostility of the philosopher Crescens—Martyrdom of Justin, and comparison of it with the death of Socrates—Vindication of his philosophical language—His character as a writer.

IN the pages of Scripture we are presented with instances of men converted from heathenism to the Gospel of Christ, but we know scarcely, if any thing, more of them, than this single fact. They no sooner burst into the blaze of faith, so as to be visible, than they are gone beyond our sight. Our curiosity is excited to know what they were before, and how they conducted themselves after this critical period, but it is very seldom gratified even by information extraneous to the text, and this too, in such cases as

we do obtain it, is very imperfect at the best. Who would not wish to know more of Dionysius the Areopagite than merely that he was converted by Paul at Athens, and afterwards became bishop there? We may indeed, from his rank, from the state of the times, and of his country, and of other collateral incidents, go some way in reasonable and instructive speculation upon his thoughts and feelings. But as these were common to others also, we can contemplate him only as the representative of a class. The individual is not before us. With regard also to those characters which have already past before us, as belonging to Ecclesiastical and not to Scriptural Biography, we know not if one was ever a heathen. We have had, therefore, still to wait for that most interesting view which presents itself on the unveiling of the heathen world, wherein we see a considerable part of the course of men whose steps we afterwards trace in tracks of light, to the end of their race, along the paths of the Church of God. This remarkable epoch is now arrived, and opens with a remarkable character. To him the whole system of heathenism was familiar, both in its depth and in its height, in its mythological superstition, and in its refined and lofty speculations; for he was both a scholar and philosopher. We can enter into his thoughts and feelings through means of his writings, which were composed on striking subjects, are of sufficient extent, and give us considerable insight into the form and position of the Church in his day. And he concluded his course with a martyrdom, the particulars of which are not entirely left to our conjecture.

Justin, the character whom we are thus introducing, was born at Flavia Neapolis, a town which occupied the place of Sichem, the old capital of Samaria. It received its name in honour of Flavius Vespasian, the emperor, who colonized it with Greeks, and thus made it one of those heathen towns with which both the Romans and the Herods had found it expedient to bridle that ever restless country. Many of its citizens must have served under the emperor in his fatal overthrow of the Jewish nation; and perhaps we may indulge, without error, the pleasing supposition, that the father or grandfather of Justin was among these, and that this progenitor of the disputant with the Jews may have had a share in settling for ever the main point of the dispute by assisting in the destruction of the Temple. Here he was born, about the beginning of the second century, and about the time that Clement and Symeon were finishing that career which he himself was destined to run, and to conclude as faithfully and as gloriously.

As he grew up in understanding, and his feeling deepened, the train of circumstances which God's grace had laid for his conversion would begin to unfold themselves before him. His native town and neighbourhood were loud and continual in calls upon his attention. Within the walls the Greek tongue, with the necessary accompaniment of its magnificent literature, would be predominant; and the time and country would be likely to place the works of Josephus in his hands. His mind could not but be strangely moved when he read, on the very scene of their occurrence, the prodigious events, which, even

in that author's lax and accommodating account, came from the direction of a God so different in every way from the gods of heathen mythology. The history of all other nations, and more especially of his own, was so different from the sober nature of this narrative, that it was grossly fabulous, incredible, and offensive, both to taste and judgment, as soon as it mounted up to the employment of divine agency ; and a God so pure was excluded by Greek philosophy from any concern in the turmoil of this nether world of gross sense. Without the walls, and raving around them like the sea round a ship, was a tumult of barbarism of a most singular aspect. Immediately at hand were the Samaritans, at variance both with heathen and Jew in their religious observances. Beyond these roared the wild agitation of Jewish fanaticism, and the more violently for the severity of the storm with which the Roman was lashing it. Had Justin been more incurious than his works show him to have been, such a view continually before his eyes must have overcome the self-satisfied carelessness with which the Greek regarded every thing foreign, especially when we consider what a point of convergency had been given to all these events by the destruction of Jerusalem. The horrible tale of that dreadful visitation of heaven must have been familiar to him from his childhood. The nursery must have been well stored with romantic stories drawn from its many sources of pity and terror, and the curiosity of youth would eagerly investigate the reality of what had so interested his childhood, when both the nation and the scenes of the events were close at hand. It would be unsafe, indeed, to lay much

stress on the particular nature of those impressions : they might have been but vague, and almost unconsciously received ; yet it would be equally unsafe to neglect their effect, and not to see in them at least some remote elements of that frame of mind in which it pleased the Lord to call him to his service. Perhaps even they gave that peculiar turn to his thoughts which afterwards led him to conflict with the Jews upon the meaning of their own prophecies.

But his chief occupation would be the pursuit of Greek literature, and when his understanding had become sufficiently matured, its philosophy would call upon him, as she did upon all well-educated Greeks, to attend her school. At this point began that instability of principle, which, at this time, and long before and after, was working the dissolution of society, and preparing it for the inroads of barbarism. No lessons from the purest wells of philosophy could by any particular benefit repair that general mischief which it caused. It is the misfortune of a certain stage of civilization, that speculation begins to supersede practice, and the paramount duties of man are less the subjects of careful performance than of idle discussion. Familiarity, they say, breeds contempt ; and certainly what is continually on the lips is seldom thought worthy of being taken into hand. Much profession is generally followed by little confession. When the grand questions affecting man's state have become the subject of ingenious dispute among the few, they supply, as knowledge spreads (but without deepening) the topics of conversation to the many, who, from being accustomed to see them bandied about in careless discus-

sion, adopted or opposed, according to the whim or purpose of the moment, begin to think them matters of indifference, and certainly find them much more convenient for conversation than for practice, and more acceptable, as supplying watchwords for maintaining the exclusive spirit of party, sect, or set, than as forming bonds of unity in well-doing. This degeneracy, which attended their observance of the strict principles of morality among the heathen, was still more frightful when it concerned points of religion among the Jews ; and he who at this day can look around him and say, that there is no fear for Christian purity of doctrine and practice, from a similar cause, must be strangely blind, or wonderfully hopeful. Among the grievous consequences of such a state of the public mind, is the great diminution of the authority of parental guidance. The boy is the child of the public, as it were. So wide is the field opened, and so indifferent seems every part of it, that the parent is deprived of much of his privilege of pointing out a path, even if he retain the will ; and when he shall have pointed it out, his son is as likely to pursue it, as a young and fiery horse to keep a given track over an open country.

Justin, therefore, had to choose his school, as Josephus had his sect, as too many a Christian has his denomination. And if even the revelation of divine truth will not satisfy and fix the mind which has been accustomed to see in it only the fountain head of the streams of sectarianism, how was the Greek philosophy likely to retain its curious follower in any one assigned school ? He, therefore, with the generality of the young men of his age, who took up the same

pursuit, ran the round of the principal schools, not only without finding satisfaction, but also with the experience of no little disgust. And yet, if any one ever carried into his search an honest spirit, open to conviction, it was he. He was moved to it by no unworthy motive of obtaining a fund of table-talk ; by no disputatious spirit, which sought materials for its conflicts ; by no unprincipled vanity, which will not scruple to dress itself out even at the expense of truth ; but by a deep sense of its lofty aim, and with a singleminded eagerness to attain its glorious end. Every sincere endeavour after truth has God's blessing upon it. Man is then upon one of those roads which ultimately centre in the everlasting city, where God is known, and his angels of grace are set in wait upon them, to encourage and to guide the traveller onward. Justin was met by such a guide, and was led, though not without a weary sole, to the final resting-place.

He sought his first instructor in a master of the Stoic school. The assumption and dogmatism of this sect was little likely to satisfy such an enquirer. Holding a God materially expressed in the sphere of the universe, and asserting that every wise man, in a manner, carried God within him—thus elevating man at God's expense, the Stoic gave himself little trouble about the deep and hidden things of one whom he had so nearly reduced to his own level. After therefore staying with him a long time, and finding that he made no advance towards the knowledge of God (for neither did his teacher possess this knowledge, nor did he think it necessary), Justin quitted him, and betook himself to a Peripatetic. But this

professor of heavenly wisdom, within a few days, disgusted him by an exhibition of worldly wisdom, in impatiently asking him to settle the terms of instruction, so that it might be beneficial to both parties. On this he left him too, and went to a noted Pythagorean, to see if he could procure from him the peculiar and excellent gift which philosophy promises. This school, though it had afforded much materials to later systems, had long ceased to exist under a distinct form and name, until lately revived by one of those revolutions of the public mind through which it proceeds to its second childhood. Indulgence in much and long excitement brings it into a state of exhaustion ; and perhaps there is not a surer token of a degenerate age, and of a declining literature, than that love of mysticism, which, declining plain and vigorous sense, adapts every thing to a perverse, tortuous, and dreamy speculation. Here, however, Justin found himself unqualified at the outset. He had not brought with him that knowledge of music, astronomy, and geometry, which this singular system, professing to be built upon the properties of numbers, considered as fundamental. A third time he had to seek a master. He determined to attach himself to a Platonic, and, fortunately, one of celebrity had lately taken up his abode in the town. To his instruction he gave himself up with entire devotion, and found himself making daily progress. He was amazingly taken (he says) with the intellectual discernment of incorporeal things, and the contemplation of the Platonic ideas gave wings to his mind ; so that he reckoned upon shortly becoming truly wise, and flattered himself with a

speedy attainment of the end of this system, which is the sight of God¹. He thought that he had found a treasure of wisdom, and, in an enthusiasm of delight, turned it over and over, now folding up and combining particulars into the general, then unfolding and resolving the general into particulars, throwing into perplexity first himself, then whomsoever he found at hand, whether junior or senior, or of his own age; sparing neither father, nor mother, nor man, nor brute, provided only he could obtain an interpreter². Thus we may suppose Justin to have re-acted the mental intoxication of the Attic youth of the days of Plato, when these brilliant speculations were presented to them. He had indeed some solid reason for his joy, for he had certainly advanced much nearer to the true principle of natural religion. But he was not necessarily nearer to the discovery of revealed. It was on the very same ground to which he had now mounted, that the most inveterate enemies of Christianity, the new Platonics, erected their hostile engines. And at the very same point at which he came into contact with Christianity, numbers of gifted men, and, at the head of them, his own countryman, Simon Magus, had entered just so far as to strike out again upon a wild course of opinions, which had nothing to do with the Gospel, except that the departure could be traced by a few borrowed terms. To the same point many unbelievers have receded in later days, to do all the

¹ See Life of Clement of Alexandria.

² Plato's *Philebus*, § 16.—one of those passages which make us sigh at the lamentable poverty of our own language, compared with the unbounded riches of the Greek.

mischievous possible from without, when their treason was discovered, or found impotent within. In fact, Justin was now at the very hinge of his everlasting interests, and, to all human appearance, a mere accident might have turned him in an instant to the choice of life or of death¹.

(A.D. 132.) He had now attained the prime of life, being about the age of thirty, when a series of incidents took place, which would co-operate to make him favourable to the Christian cause. Palestine was cruelly ravaged by the rebellion of the impostor Barcochebas, or Son of the Star, which name he took as pretending to be the promised Messiah prophesied by Balaam under that figure in Numbers xxiv. 17. The Christians probably suffered much from both parties; from the Pretender as not acknowledging him to be their Christ², from the heathen populace as his supporters. Justin would thus have an opportunity, and a desire also, of seeing this singular and calumniated class of men nearer at hand; and he confesses the great change which was thus wrought in his opinions. He had been full of the usual prejudices against them, which had been excited among the heathen, chiefly by the calumnies of the Jews³, and they were not likely to be least malignant in their native land. When he saw them fearless against death, and all other terrors, he thought it impossible that they could lead a vicious and sensual life. For what man that was a lover of

¹ The account of Justin's conversion occurs in the opening of his dialogue with Trypho.

² Justin. Apol. i. 31.

³ Dial. Trypho. 17. 108.

pleasure, licentious, and a feeder on human flesh, would welcome death, so as to be deprived of his enjoyments? Would he not rather endeavour, by all means, ever to live this life, and escape the notice of the magistrate? So far would he be from denouncing himself in the certainty of death¹. This last resistance made by the Jews in their native land was fearfully punished by the Romans; and Justin could not but have been struck with forcible reflections, all tending, however remotely, to the end of his conversion, when at the great annual fair at Terebinthus he beheld the novel and horrible spectacle of a whole nation sold like beasts. The disturbed state of the interior, perhaps, caused him to remove to the seaport Cesarea, the head-quarters of the Roman governor; for the next circumstance that we learn concerning him took place at the sea-side.

He was enwrapt in the contemplations into which the Platonic philosophy had led him, and wishing to indulge them undisturbed, had retired to a spot not far from the sea. Here his solitude was interrupted by the presence of a venerable old man, of meek but dignified deportment. A conversation commenced, at the opening of which Justin displayed the selfish and worthless spirit which ever inspires wisdom merely human. The grand advantage of philosophy was not only to apprehend right reason, but also to look down from it, as from a chariot, on the errors and vain pursuits of the rest of mankind, and complacently to observe how they do nothing that is sound or agreeable to God. From this height the

¹ Apol. ii. 12.

old man soon plucks him down by a few questions, through which he leads him to give up the Platonic notion of arriving at the sight of God, and to ask for other instructors than the philosophers. The old man refers him to the Jewish prophets, and Christ and his apostles; and having recommended him to pray, above all, that the gates of life may be opened to him, for that those things which they taught could neither be conceived nor understood, unless God and his Christ should grant the power, he left him, never to be seen by him again.

But at that moment Justin felt a fire kindled in his soul; and a love of the prophets, and of those men who were beloved of Christ, took possession of him. On further revolving in his mind the words of the old man, he found that the philosophy which he had preached was the only sound and useful system. This, therefore, he henceforward adopted: thus at length he chose his school, and Christ for his schoolmaster, nor ever had to seek again. But what a change must now have come over all his former objects of contemplation and pursuit! The vague and broken visions in which his unenlightened mind had formerly taken such delight, gave way to definite conceptions,—ill-founded and fond conjecture, to sure and certain hope,—the vain desire of seeing God, to the satisfactory consciousness of knowing all that could be known of him in this life, and the assurance of knowing him even as he should be known in the life to come. The hourly thought, the daily occupation at home, and conversation abroad, his affections, his deportment, his friends, and his companions, were all changed,—life, both

within and without, wore quite a new aspect. What a strange and joyful feeling must have accompanied the sense of such a change! Let the Christian, who can remember one fit of perplexity dispersed, one proud or angry feeling softened, one stain of conscience removed, one sorrow comforted by the word of God, and bears in remembrance too the exceeding joy which accompanied the change,—let him try to conceive the overpowering feeling of heavenly joy which came upon the heathen when all things, both of heaven and earth, were changed to him,—and darkness became light, guilt innocence, ignorance knowledge. For the dreams of the philosophers, he now took up those prophets which the old man had recommended; and, if he was at Cesarea, the sights passing before his eyes would be a living commentary upon their text. The predictions of them and of Christ were fulfilling: the land streamed with the blood of the denounced people, and the streets of the seaports would be crowded with the interminable processions of slaves, who were to be shipped off from their country to a distant land of rigorous servitude. With his attention thus forcibly called to prophecy, we no longer wonder that he should have poured forth such a store in his *Dialogue with Trypho*.

But his diligence must have been amazing, and could only have been set and maintained in motion by the high principles of the Gospel, and by the grace of the Holy Spirit. He had now to learn a system so totally new, that all previous acquirements, instead of being a help and introduction, were a hindrance. Ignatius and Polycarp had

known Christ from their tender years, if not from their cradle, and their minds had grown up in the Gospel. But Justin had hitherto directed his mental energies, in all their prime, to studies which, both in form and spirit, were opposed to it. He had admired the sublime and beautiful theory, which brilliant analogy, specious argument, creative fancy, language of exquisite purity, had tricked out so attractively that he could not but consent to its claims of truth. And he had imbibed, both from the lesson and through the process of learning it, all those unsanctified feelings which accompany the exclusive attainment of the wisdom of this world. We have already seen an instance of the hard-hearted vanity which, under such instruction, took possession of his bosom. But he had now to bid an entire farewell to this long-continued frame of mind which had been the growth of years, the result of anxious study. A book was laid before him, wherein was the truth indeed, and sublime and beautiful beyond the reach of human conception ; but it was conveyed in a plain homely style, and in a barbarous dialect of his own tongue, sufficient to disgust at the outset the accomplished scholar. Its beauty and sublimity were thus veiled to such as did not seek in the spirit of meekness and sincerity,—and how should such a spirit be found in a philosopher? The grace of God was in Justin, and this alone enabled him to overcome the obstacles which were in his way. It enabled him to despise the vain trickery of language, to detect the frauds of sophistry ; and, stripped of these, his former favourite was but a

deformed and hideous hag. That which to the worldly spirit has ever seemed foolishness, was found by him to be wisdom and truth indeed. With no less gratification would he join the assemblies of the faithful; and how joyful a thing was it to this heathen to be gathered into that fold of conversion, where all, in full faith in the word, had turned way from dumb idols, and served the only and uncreated God through his Son; and they who formerly took pleasure in lust, now admitted of chastity only: they who had employed magic arts, now devoted themselves to the only and unbegotten God: they who had loved riches and possessions beyond every thing, now contributed to the common stock all they had, and gave to every one that asked: they who hated one another, and slew one another, and used no mutual hospitality, because of different customs, now, after the coming of Christ, used the same mode of life—prayed for their enemies, and endeavoured to win over, by gentle persuasion, those who hated them unjustly—in order, that by living according to the pure precepts of Christ, they may be in good hopes of obtaining the same blessings from God the Lord of all ¹.

Perhaps it was the Church of Cesarea which had the precious privilege of receiving into her bosom this convert, who was not slow in exhibiting the fruits of her instruction. He addressed the Gentiles in a written oration ², and could we be sure that this is the same with that which has come down to us,

¹ Apol. i. 14.

² Euseb. iv. 18., who mentions a second also.

under the title of a hortatory address to the Greeks¹, there would not be a more interesting document in the whole range of ecclesiastical literature. It would be the first address extant that was made to the heathen, after the speeches of St. Paul in the Acts; and would discover to us the points in which Justin felt dissatisfaction with heathen philosophy, as also wherein he knew the Pagan system to be most assailable. Thus it would bear a very different character from any previous Christian writing. After having been all along in the company of saints, prophets, and apostles, we feel a sudden surprise at being thus introduced to an assembly of heathen gods and philosophers; and some have even recoiled as at the entrance of a Pagan temple, not considering that our guide is leading us not to worship, but to disperse and destroy. It is, indeed, to us more a subject of curiosity than of spiritual improvement; and yet there is more to be gained of the latter than at first sight we may think. We are the descendants of heathens, and the mercy of God cannot but be seen more clearly, and felt more deeply, when we see the misery from which their conversion has delivered us. Nor can the arguments which shook their former vain belief, and led them to think of Christ, be uninteresting to their children. We may even apply them, and most of his observations, to ourselves. They will remind us of our profession: they will show us how little we have advanced from

¹ Considering the early date of this work, any discrepancies in opinion from his other works surely need not lead us to reject it. See, however, Bp. Kay. See also Cave's *Historia Literaria*.

the heathenism of our fathers, if we do the things which he there reprobates in them : they may convict us of the idolatry of the heart, and therefore of the essence, though not of the outward form, of heathen obliquity. The view also of the ground here assumed by the preacher, different as earth from heaven, is full of interest, and brings most serious and affecting considerations home to the heart. Men are here addressed as still in the darkness of ignorance and error, are reprov'd with sad examples of both : they are admonished to forsake and to change, not to advance in a course begun. It is said to them, "ye are now darkness," and not, "ye are now light in the Lord¹." They are told that they are walking vainly as fools, and not circumspectly as wise². We see not here the preacher exhorting his holy brethren and partakers in the heavenly calling³, and confirming both himself and them in holiness : but we see, as it were, the Spirit of Christ preaching unto the spirits in prison⁴. It is as if we heard Noah preaching to the unbelieving world, or Lot to the cities of the plain. We are not reading the revelation of God's goodness, but the unveiling of the mystery of iniquity. No promises are held out to their perseverance in the course before them, but punishment is denounced in threats. There is no allusion to the workings of the Holy Spirit, no appeal to gifts and graces of power and truth, no reference to bright examples of saints. But charges are brought against writings of unclean

¹ Ephes. v. 8.² Heb. iii. 1.³ Ib. 15.⁴ 1 Pet. iii. 19.

error, against deeds of darkness and delusion. Our instruction thus received may not be so direct ; but much that sinks deep and lies permanently, falls on the mind indirectly : it does not then come in that familiar manner which is too apt to create a spirit of neglect, and to make us slight it as a thrice-told tale. It may, indeed, be entirely missed by some minds, which are unable from want of the previous preparation to place themselves in the position proper for receiving it. But where it is received, it is deep and full. The novelty of the stream by which it comes disposes us to examine it, and wakes a new train of thought and feeling. We were content hitherto to go no further into the darkness of the Gentile world than the brief descriptions, or rather allusions, of Scripture would carry us. But here we find ourselves in the midst of it, and can appreciate its thickness and its horror. It is as the Egyptian darkness at noonday, of which we could only conceive heretofore by an occasional and short overcasting of the sky. How brightly shines the light of the revelation of Jesus Christ, after having been admitted to such a contract, how glorious is the shining of the mercy of redemption. Let no one, therefore, depreciate this class of sacred writings, and suppose that they can interest none but the curious scholar. This were to show a narrow comprehension, and shallow knowledge, if not a dulness of feeling. God has not given a single document of his Church in vain : every one has its assigned and profitable purpose for his saints, whom he variously disposes by various gifts, according to their various capacities and tempers. What may be

scanty to one, may be full to another; and what would be neglected by one, may be put to account by another.

Such a convert as Justin was not likely to lie hidden in provincial obscurity. We have to follow him to the capital of the empire, where he arrived, clad still in his philosopher's garb¹, which he retained to the last; considering himself still a philosopher, but of the only true philosophy, and professing himself a teacher not of human wisdom, but of the divine word. Here he gave his labour to the Church, and took his post in giving oral instruction². But his services were soon required in writing. The capital was, of course, the general receptacle of the provinces, and while Asiatic rites found their way into her temples, Asiatic heresies would also endeavour to enter her churches. Simon Magus, the first heretic, had early imported his pernicious doctrines, and had made such an impression, that Justin tells us he saw with his own eyes a statue raised to him with the inscription "To Simon, holy God³." The venom which he introduced was now working with augmented deadliness under Marcion, who was at the very height of his fatal reputation there⁴. Heresy could have been no new occurrence to one who had arrived from the East, and Justin had probably studied its general features, and prepared him-

¹ Dial. Trypho. i. Euseb. H. E. iv. 11. ² Act. Martyr. 2.

³ Apol. i. 26. It is now generally believed that Justin was deceived by an inscription to a Sabine god, beginning with "Semoni Saneo Deo. Fidio."

⁴ Justin came to Rome in the reign of Antoninus Pius, and Tertullian says of Marcion "Antoninianus hæreticus est sub Pio impius," adv. Marcion. i. 19. See too Justin, Apol. i. 26. 58.

self to meet it from those ample stores which he had laid in of ancient philosophy. But what must have been his grief, and that of every new convert, when after being admitted into Christianity, as into a fellowship of perfect peace, affectionate brotherhood, purest principles and morals, he found under that title men whose character so contradicted this profession? Many, in his situation, we may fear, turned back from Christ, and walked with him no more¹. It was a hard stone of offence, and who could bear it? Justin, however, not having taken up the faith lightly, knew that offences must come, and was aware that these men had gone out from the Church, but were not of it—that they had gone out that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of the Church². His surprise, therefore, was probably succeeded by a resolution to oppose these enemies of truth with all the arms which God had given him: and they were sharp and weighty. Marcion received from him a severe blow, but not such as to silence him, in a treatise directed against him³. And the whole body of heretics were assailed by him at one general assault, in a work which he composed during this visit⁴. Nor did he confine his exertions to these occasional vindications of the truth, but taught men by word of mouth continually to avoid the doctrines of the false prophets⁵, who were come among the flock in sheep's clothing. Like a good and faithful steward, he preached under a deep sense of his responsibility, diligently con-

¹ John vi. 60. 66.² 1 John i. 19.³ Euseb. H. E. iv. 18. who quotes Irenæus iv. 14. v. 26.⁴ Justin. Apol. i. 26.⁵ Dial. Tryph. 82.

sulting the Scriptures, and speaking not under the influence of vain-glory or sordid love of gain, as did the heretics ; but in obedience to the blessed word, and through the faith and knowledge and grace obtained from its earnest study¹. These two works, although they answered the purpose of the time, were soon so eclipsed by the great work of Irenæus, that they were scarce, if extant, in the days of Eusebius². But vanished as they have from amongst men, the record of them remains with God, with whom no good service, however quickly forgotten by the world, shall lose its reward.

(A.D. 148.) On his arrival at Rome, he had found the Church enjoying comparative peace, under the mild government of the first Antonine. But even under such an emperor this did not last long. Pestilence and famine began to desolate the empire ; and the people, with their priests and philosophers at their head, discovered the cause in the anger of the gods at the toleration of such enemies to them as the Christians³. They were sedulously charged with the most horrible crimes, and, thus branded, were persecuted both by the sentences of the magistrates, and by the riots of the multitude. At a time when the blows of persecution were becoming intolerably heavy, Justin boldly stepped forward to arrest the hand of the smiter. He presented to the emperor an Apology for the Christians. It was a step of great personal danger, inasmuch as he thus professed himself a Christian to

¹ Dial. Tryph. 82.

² Remark his expressions in H. E. iv. 18.

³ The usual cry. See Tertull. ad Nation. i. 9. Apol. 40.

the emperor's face; and the law of Trajan was still in force, which, though it forbade the Christians to be purposely sought after, yet inexorably adjudged them to death when they allowed themselves to be such. He was not, however, the first who had braved this danger. Both Quadratus and Aristides had exposed themselves to it, in presenting Apologies to Adrian. The title itself is one of strong and melancholy expression. An apology means the defence made by the accused before his judges. If we take a sorrowful pleasure in reading the defence of an innocent man—if, amid the works of Plato, we turn over, with deep interest, the defence of Socrates, what should be our feeling in perusing these defences made by our spiritual forefathers against the calumnies of the unbelieving world? Serving their God with all devotion, even to loss of life—maintaining the strictest purity, no less in thought than in word and deed, in love and charity with all mankind, so as even to pray for their persecutors, they were accused, by men whose character was the contrary to all this, of holding no God, of deeds of revolting impurity in their assemblies, of murder, witchcraft, and every thing denounced by law both human and divine. On such a charge they were exposed to the most ignominious punishments, and to the most exquisite torments. Under these circumstances Justin came forward, and addressed his work to the Emperor Antoninus Pius, and his partners Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, and to the senate and people of Rome¹. He begins with claim-

¹ About 150 years after the birth of Christ. *Apol. i. 46.*

ing from them common justice, and then proceeds to disprove the charges so falsely brought against them, as of atheism, impurity, disaffection, and to show that some of their real doctrines, as—the future state, the worship of the Son of God, the future conflagration—and others, so far from containing any thing abhorrent to reason or natural feeling, had all of them their parallels among the heathen poets and philosophers. He then proceeds to declare the nature of Christ,—sets forth the Jewish prophecies concerning him,—and concludes with giving an account of their initiation of converts, and the rites and forms of their assemblies,—all of which had been misrepresented by the most shocking calumnies. The earnest strain of truth and innocence pervades this treatise, and it discloses an honest and uncompromising spirit, which does not fear to contradict the Stoic prejudices of Marcus¹; and to tell the potentates whom he is addressing, that they will not escape the future judgment of God, if they abide in injustice².

This celebrated work has met with much unfair treatment from persons, who, either from indolence or prejudice, would not,—or, from ignorance or narrow comprehension, could not, place themselves in the circumstances of the writer. It is, indeed, abundantly easy for a man, sitting down in undisturbed leisure,—or, it may be, even reclining on a couch,—to criticise a work which the writer composed amid the incessant occupation of teaching, with the sword of persecution hanging over his head, and which he presented at the hazard of his life. It costs but

¹ Apol. i. 42.

² Ib. 68.

little exertion to turn over the leaves, and note down its uncritical expositions, its singular opinions, its deficiencies in taste or judgment, its want of logical arrangement. It is as easy, and, it may be added, as unfeeling, to do this, as for the lolling spectator in the amphitheatre to watch the false thrusts, and find fault with the erroneous ward of the poor gladiator who is fighting for his life. Again, those who are disappointed at the omission of some doctrine, or offended at the maintenance of some position, and may justly blame on such a point a theological work of their own days, should consider to whom this treatise is addressed—how necessary it was that it should be accommodated, as far as sincerity would allow, to the notions of the heathen. They must divest themselves of the notion that he is speaking to them, and must place themselves among his heathen readers, as far as their information or imagination can carry them,—and, where they fail, proceed with charity.

Of its success with the high powers to whom it was addressed we are ignorant¹. But we cannot but suppose that it had great though gradual effect among the heathen in general, and served also to confirm many waverers on the brink of passing over to the Church. And this seems to have been Justin's purpose, much more than any direct influence upon the heads of government. He would scarcely have ventured on a second treatise of the same kind, had

¹ The rescript of Antoninus, appended to this Apology, which some have supposed a consequence of this work, has by others been ascribed to Marcus Aurelius, and by others been repudiated as a forgery.

he not seen good fruit arise from the first. Some part, at least, of the public mind was disabused of its erroneous notions of the Christian, and probably enlightened to the disgusting folly of heathenism. When we consider how passively the most absurd opinions will abide with us from mere habit, and because we have never examined them or seen them examined, and how immediately they take flight, like bats and owls, when the light is brought to them, we may estimate the consequences of the ancient apologies. Thus, if Justin came late, even at the eleventh hour, into the vineyard of the Lord, he made compensation by the energy with which he worked; and taking into account both his oral and written instruction, he might almost have said with St. Paul, that though called last, yet he had laboured more abundantly than they all¹. Such useful service engaged him to make a considerable stay at the capital².

In the course of time he returned to the provinces, and the next place to which we can trace him is Ephesus. Having already contended for the faith with the heathen and the heretic, he now entered the lists against the Jew. Here he held his celebrated dialogue with Trypho, a most learned man of that nation³. But it must be confessed that he entered the lists very inadequately prepared for such a conflict. With the usual incuriosity of his countrymen, which, if pardonable in any people, was so in the possessors of such a tongue and such a literature as the Greek, he had been content to remain

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 10.

² Euseb. H. E. iv. 11.

³ Ib. 18.

ignorant of the language of the land where he was born¹. But for a person acquainted with a book only through a translation, however perfect it may be, to contend with one who has studied it in the original, is as hopeful and prudent an undertaking as for one who has seen but the picture to assert equal accuracy of knowledge with one who has seen the person or examined the spot there represented. Numerous and inevitable are the errors into which such a disputant must fall. Not even a picture can be thoroughly understood without a knowledge of the original. There will always be something which is doubtful as to what it represents, and whose meaning can be ascertained only by a reference to the original. The most accurate touch, in its very faithfulness to nature as she is represented to our imperfect vision, must leave us sometimes uncertain whether a distant object be a tower or a rock, a cloud or a mountain. But far greater than this is the uncertainty of various points in a translation. Let there be not a single error in it, still it cannot but occasionally mislead, as well as most inadequately express. No two languages run so exactly parallel with each other, as to have exactly corresponding terms, except in the common and elementary words. The consequence is, that the original term is represented by one either of a narrower or fuller meaning. In ordinary cases, this may be of little importance; but when we come to disputable points, the translation is worse than worthless. The champion who relies upon it will either confine his cause to too narrow a

¹ This is evident from the whole of his Dialogue.

compass, or press it too far¹. In either case he may arrive at a conclusion which directly opposes the original. Now, no two languages differ more in every way than the Hebrew and the Greek. What then must have been the position of Justin when he stood up to fight on the slippery ground of the Septuagint, even supposing this translation as perfect as the difference of languages would allow, instead of being very imperfect, and most imperfect of all, in that very part to which he had need to have by far the most frequent recourse, the prophecies? The judgment of his age was also exceedingly uncritical; and though the Jew had no superiority here, yet the nature of the combat gave him a great advantage. He was the assailed party. Now ever so little error in an assailant is fatal to the success even of the preponderating body of truth which he produces, and it requires much less exercise of judgment to detect the unskilful position of an adversary, than to post ourselves on the right ground. The Jew, therefore, was but confirmed in his former belief, and naturally took offence at a doctrine which was supported by proofs, many of them so palpably erroneous. As all the Fathers, with but one or two exceptions, were ignorant of Hebrew, we cannot wonder at the little success they had among the Jews. Much

¹ Do preachers in general sufficiently consult the original? Owing to the abundance of general terms, and to the gross imperfection and obscurity of our language, from its want of inflexions and terminations, the Epistles cannot be read with any security (at least by any meek and prudent man) without careful reference to the Greek. The wretched crutches of a commentary will not prevent a fall.

more harm than good must have been done by their rash encounters.

This dialogue, in imitation of those of Plato, is furnished with an agreeable introductory scene. He describes himself as encountering, in his morning walk, the Jew Trypho. His philosopher's habit occasions a remark which leads to speak of philosophy, and this brings Justin on the subject of his conversion to Christianity. Trypho in reply advises him to come over to Judaism from Christianity, as he had done to Christianity from philosophy: and here the dispute commences. Justin first of all proves against Trypho the abrogation of the Law of Moses, and justification through Christ only; and shows how the Law in its ordinances prefigured the Gospel, which was its end and object. His argument leads him on to demonstrate the divine pre-existence of Christ, maintaining that it was he who appeared under the old covenant to Abraham, the Patriarchs, and Moses. He then proves from prophecy his incarnation, passion, and resurrection, and the conversion of the Gentiles. In the course of this argument he solves certain objections, by maintaining two advents of Christ, the last of which was yet to come, and to introduce the millennium, after which was to follow the judgment. Such are the great outstanding points of this dialogue, which, amidst the exceeding interest attending such a discussion in such an age, impresses a sense of pain, from the occasional weakness and defect of argument by which the truth is maintained. The proper application of a clear and marked prophecy is sometimes succeeded by a forced and fanciful interpretation

of an unimportant passage, which is quite unequal to the stress laid upon it: an acknowledged type is followed by a whimsical emblem¹; sound argument by capricious assumption. In short, in reading this treatise, and the similar works of Tertullian and Cyprian, which have drawn so largely from it, we cease to wonder that the fathers made so little impression upon the rabbis. It is to be feared that many a reader, on coming to the conclusion, has ironically used Trypho's words—"We have found more than we expected, or was ever possible to be expected."

This conference is made to occupy two days, after which Justin is supposed to sail from Ephesus. How long he abode in the provinces does not appear. But he had the privilege of resembling St. Paul in two visits to Rome; in the first to preach and depart, in the second to preach and die. On this last occasion he found Marcus Aurelius on the throne. Never had a reign occurred so uniformly hostile to the cause of Christianity. Human philosophy has entertained a natural antipathy to the Gospel of Christ, down from the days of Marcus and Julian to the time of Frederic of Prussia and the French Revolutionists. And yet its unsanctified dictates are perfectly compatible with acquiescence in the grossest superstition. As long as man's true position, with regard to the invisible power which governs the world around him, is left in uncertainty, there must remain that indefinite fear, that perplexing ignorance, which prompts him to apply any remedy which

¹ See his types of the cross under the Old Testament, c. 86. The passage is much akin to that in Apol. i. 55, where he shows the figure of the cross to prevail in works of nature and art.

offers. He will, therefore, readily adopt such as time and custom, his only authorities for the means of intercourse with that power, have sanctioned. They will even, like magic charms, be recommended by their very absurdity. Intercourse so extraordinary (they may argue) may well require an extraordinary shape. Thus the philosophic Marcus was scrupulous in the observance of the rites and customs of the religion of his country, into which he had been initiated, in all their absurdity, by his admission at an early age into the priestly college of the Salii. He was, therefore, open to the constant suggestions both of the philosophers and of the priests. The former had but lately taken the alarm, but it was only greater on that account; and their cruelty was equal to their cowardice. He had also taken up a sect which, more than all the rest, was hostile to Christianity. The Epicurean (almost its sole rival among the Romans) in its indulgent indolence might have overlooked it. But it had little chance of such merciful neglect from the proud pragmatical Stoic. A celebrated passage has been quoted from his work, by every one who has considered the conduct of Marcus towards the Christians, where he speaks of the sheer obstinacy, the undignified rashness, the theatrical exhibition of the Christian martyrs. But they have not adverted to a strain which pervades his whole work, and which, as a Stoic, he would never cease to sound forth. This is the necessity of the duties to society. The world, in his system, was considered as a society of gods and of men. Every man was a part of this world, and was, therefore, naturally bound to prefer, on all occasions, the

general welfare to his individual¹. And the law of nature decreed that the necessities of life should be transferred from the inactive and unprofitable to the wise, and good, and brave man². Now the Christians would appear to him in the light of the former class. He saw them not in the senate, he saw them not in the chair of the magistrate, he saw them not in the Temple, he saw them not in the Amphitheatre³. He knew, moreover, that they purposely abstained from these, and other prominent stations of usefulness, and occasions of social union; of course he thought that persons who seemed to do so little towards the maintenance of society had little claim to protection of the civil government by which it is maintained, and may have feared for the very dissolution of society should such principles spread. If, therefore, he made no new edict against them, he put them under a virtual excommunication or outlawry⁴. He withdrew his protecting arm, and left them without defence to the tender mercies of the tribunals and of the populace⁵. These usual instruments of persecution were unfortunately put into dreadful energy from the rage and fear excited by the calamitous series of war, pestilence, and earth-

¹ Cicero de Fin. iii. 64.

² Ibid. de Offic. iii. 31. See too all the sections preceding from the 20th. See also lib. iii. 8. 16. iv. 4. 29. &c. of Marcus's work.

³ See Tertull. de Idololatriâ. 17, 18, &c. But his Montanist principles carry him beyond his brethren. There were Christians in the army.

⁴ His own term ἀπόσχισμα πόλεως. iv. 29. expresses both his opinion of them, and the position in which he placed them.

⁵ Athenagoras Legat. 1.

quake, which pervaded his reign. And the hostility of the emperor's philosophy was also aggravated by that of his superstition. Miserable, indeed, was now the situation of the Christians. Their lives and their property were in jeopardy every hour, throughout the empire. Other persecutions, if not local, had not been universal at one and the same moment, and a refuge was open, if not to the power, yet to the hope of the sufferer. But now the whole empire was one place of execution, and cries for mitigation of their sufferings arose from every quarter. We have the record of no less than six defences put forth by the Christians during this reign¹, four of which survive to tell us the tale of the atrocious calumnies and ill-treatment which pursued them.

Such was the situation of the Christian Church when Justin entered for the second, and last time, the capital of the empire, and centre of oppression of the Church. He boldly put himself once more in the front of danger, and presented a second *Apology*. The blood of three martyrs, put to death together merely because they confessed themselves Christians, was fresh when he presented it. It opens with a detailed example of the cruelties which they were suffering, and in reply to the unfeeling taunts as to—"Why God did not interfere to deliver the Christians, if he was indeed their helper? and why, if death was the way to God, they did not kill themselves, and save others the trouble?"—he calmly vindicates both God and the Christian. After showing

¹ By Justin, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus, Melito, Apollinarius.

the superior excellence of the Christian teaching, and illustrating the proof which their fortitude in torments and death gave to the innocence of their lives, by the effect which it had in his own conversion, he concludes. It is a mournful document. The sword and rack of persecution come before our eyes as we read it, and, like St. Paul's last letter, it contains a melancholy foreboding of his fast-approaching death. His notorious exertions in teaching, and the fame of his writings, had marked him out. But, above all, his having quitted the ranks of the philosophers, roused the vengeance of that malignant and unprincipled class of men. Foremost of these was one Crescens¹, of the Cynic sect, which, rude and unlovely as it was in its very best days, had now revived from its long mersion into the Stoic, without however, the revival of its sterling qualities². This man was a wallower in iniquity³. He was prepared, therefore, both from heart and head to do his worst against the Christians. He had been most sedulous in propagating calumnies against them, charging them with atheism and impiety. Justin had especially incurred his hatred, because he had publicly interrogated and convicted him of utter ignorance on the question. And such an adversary was not likely not to be lashed into greater fury by the severe terms in which he was mentioned in Justin's last Apology. His machinations, his vain-glory, his ignorance, his viciousness of character,

¹ Apol. ii. 3. Euseb. H. E. iv. 16.

² Teuneman. Cousin's Transl. § 120.

³ Tatian. Orat. 19.

are there proclaimed to the whole empire. Under the philosopher Marcus the machinations of this philosopher had full scope; and Justin had not long complained of them before their purpose was accomplished.

(A.D. 168.) He was brought, in company with five others, before the tribunal of Rusticus, the Prætorian Prefect. On being commanded, in the usual form, to worship the gods and obey the emperors¹; he answered with a distinct profession of Christianity, which the interrogations of the magistrate only caused him to repeat in greater detail. His companions were next questioned, and they made the same bold profession. The Prefect then turned to Justin, and said, "Hark, thou that hast the reputation of eloquence, and thinkest that thou holdest the truth: if thou shalt be scourged and beheaded, art thou persuaded that thou wilt go up into heaven?" Justin answered, "I hope, if I undergo this, to possess its gifts. For I am well assured that the divine gift abides with all who live thus, until the end of the world."—"Do you conceive, then," said Rusticus, "that you will go up into heaven, and receive a reward?"—"I not only conceive, but know, and am fully assured," replied Justin. On this the Prefect said, "Nothing remains but for us to come immediately to the point. Sacrifice with one consent to the gods." Justin answered, "No one in his proper senses falls from piety into impiety." To the last threat of the prefect, that he

¹ We now enter on the Acts of the martyrdom of Justin, as our authority.

would put him to a cruel death, Justin answered, "It is through a cruel death that we hope and pray to be saved, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ; since this will be our salvation and means of confidence before the more terrible and the universal tribunal of our Lord and Saviour." To the same purpose was the answer of the rest of the martyrs, 'Do what you will, for we are Christians, and do not sacrifice to idols.'

On this Rusticus pronounced sentence, ordering that those who will not sacrifice to the gods, nor obey the decree of the emperor, be punished by scourging and beheading, as the laws direct. The blessed company of faithful witnesses was then led off to the place of execution, and received the crown of martyrdom. Some of the brethren privily obtained their bodies, and buried them in a suitable spot.

Thus Justin obtained that title which has ever since been so honourably affixed to his name. He exchanged the appellation of philosopher for that of martyr. The former follower of the pupil of Socrates obtained indeed but a rude hand to record the last moments of his testimony to the truth. Yet the Attic eloquence of Plato would have seemed as much out of place in the narrative of such an act of meek and singleminded devotion, as a sumptuous theatrical pall spread upon the Lord's table. That decoration was better bestowed in gilding the last hours of a man whose truly theatrical departure from life, compared with the noble simplicity of Justin's, should have reversed the unjust opinion which the royal philosopher has passed upon the Christian martyrdoms. How

widely different, indeed, in act, in word, in thought, in hope, were the ends of the lives of these two philosophers; one of whom had founded the philosophy of morality, the other had exchanged the vain-glory of that morality for the lowly-minded faith of the Gospel. Justin knew whither he was going, and could talk to those around him of the immortality of the soul, not in conjecture, but in certain and fast apprehension. He could exhort by sure doctrine, not amuse by ingenious speculation; he could inspire faith, and not communicate a vague hope. His cheerfulness had a distinct and worthy cause, and was neither that calm satisfaction which a man will assume on the persuasion that he knows the worst, nor that serene pleasantry with which he will disguise, both to his friends and himself, the uncertainty of his hopes and inquietude of his mind. He obeyed a summons which he joyfully understood, and did not submit to a blind and irresistible necessity. While the mere moralist exhibited in his last words a trait of gross heathen superstition, the Christian could sing Alleluiah to the Lord that liveth for ever, and giveth the life everlasting to them whom he hath redeemed by his great sacrifice unto salvation.

Being the earliest writer of the Church who had not conversed with the Apostles, and being also the first-fruits to the Church of Gentile philosophy, Justin prefers a strong claim to the examination of his opinions. The canvas of them does not belong to a work like this, and yet they cannot be passed over without notice. He has been charged by two very opposite parties with interpolating portions of his old philosophy amidst the truths of Christianity.

One side, greedily catching at his former attachment to the school of Plato, and at his adopting certain philosophical terms (as he naturally would) in his addresses to the heathen, impute to him the introduction of Platonic notions concerning the nature of the Godhead. They can know little of Plato, and have paid not much attention to Justin, who maintain this point. It is true that he has in one or two instances adapted the language of Plato to Christian doctrines. Why should he not, in addressing Gentiles? But that language could never have originated the doctrine¹. The other side has a much more serious charge to produce. But it will vanish, when we consider that Justin is not expounding the Christian doctrine, but defending it from superficial misrepresentation. He does not, therefore, enter into its essence, but is content with showing its reasonableness, just so far as it was necessary to expose it to the unbeliever. In such a case he was justified in clothing its tenets in such philosophical terms as, though not exact, would convey to his heathen readers an adequate notion, so far as to disabuse them of their ignorance, and to show that Christianity was as rational as their philosophy. Thus he adopts from the Stoic school (and perhaps here he had Marcus in view) the term "seminal word" or "reason²." According to this, Christ, as the Logos, is the source of all reason, which is sown like seed

¹ I must refer the reader for particulars to the Bishop of Lincoln's Account of the Writings and Opinions of Justin Martyr.

² For the *Σπέρματικὸς λόγος* see Diogen. Laert. vii. 136; the work of Marcus himself, iv. 14; Cicero. Nat. Deor. ii. 22. 32. Justin applies it in Apol. i. 32. 46. ii. 8. 13.

in the minds of men, of which all mankind partake. Hence all men, even before the coming of Christ, who have lived agreeably to this implanted reason, were in such a sense Christians¹. And hence Socrates in part knew Christ. All this, in reality, amounts to nothing more than the assertion of that knowledge of natural religion which is allowed by St. Paul to the heathen²; and he has thrown the proposition into this form, partly to show how futile was the charge of atheism against Christians. For if those men, but partially informed with that reason, were accounted Atheists in their day, how much rather would the same charge be laid against the Christians, who are wholly informed³? Besides, he draws a careful distinction between this universal gift, and the peculiar gift of grace which the Christian enjoys⁴.

His language is very decided upon the freedom of the will, as is that of the rest of the early fathers, who had continually before them the fate of the Stoics and necessity of the Gnostics. Justification through faith, and all the cardinal doctrines of the Gospel, appear in his pages, even more distinctly than we might have expected from the nature of his works, none of which were addressed to Christians: and, towards the end of his first Apology, an interesting insight is given into the interior of the Church, as to its ritual observances. With regard to externals, it must be confessed that he is not very lucid in his arrangement, and that his style wants

¹ Apol. i. 46. Tertullian denies it downright, *de Anima*. 1.

² Rom. i. 19, 20, 21.

³ Apol. ii. 8.

⁴ Apol. ii. 13.

polish. But it does not want force. On the contrary, it has all that vigour which sincerity of feeling so fully imparts, all that earnestness which shows the utter conviction of the understanding, and carries the reader along with it, and all that natural persuasiveness, which, while it is denied to the expression of the most cunning inventions of the head, comes with an overflowing stream from the mere outpouring of the heart.

TATIAN.

Connexion of Instructor and Pupil—Birth-place of Tatian, and its associations—Travels, conversion, and visit to Rome—Becomes a pupil of Justin—Succeeds him in his school—His work against the Heathen—Inference from it with regard to his lapse into heresy—Brief sketch of his system—Object and nature of his Diatessaron—His tour through the provinces—Reflections on his falling off.

To turn from the martyr Justin to his gifted pupil Tatian is indeed a sorrowful change. We meet with a violent interruption to that natural feeling of delight with which we follow out the master in the pupil, and fondly expect to see his chief excellencies still in being under another form. We have been familiarly attached to his doctrine, and trace it with all the lively interest that we would a known and favourite stream into a new and unexamined district. The water is still the same, but its appearance is infinitely varied by a new scenery, by the turns which it takes from its original direction, and by the accession of other streams. Amidst our gratification we suddenly turn a bend of the mountains,

and our stream becomes the dark sluggish drain of a foggy, interminable fen. It is seldom, in such a case, that we revert in memory with any pleasure to the original stream. Great is the disappointment. We might have hoped to have our understanding and our feelings pleasingly engaged. We might have traced the opinions of the master, here running out into consequences which he had not followed up, here modified, or exemplified, by the different mind of the pupil, and every where varied by a different power of expression. And we might have hung with delighted feelings over many a characteristic trait, or interesting anecdote, of the master, recorded with affectionate mention by the pupil, who is evidently yearning with the remembrance of sweet communion long past away for ever. How instructive and affecting is the perusal of those works of Plato and Xenophon, in which we are referred to the instruction of their master, Socrates. But all this lovely connexion is cut asunder, in the case of Justin and Tatian, by the lapse of the latter into opinions which his master regarded with abhorrence, and contradicted by his writings. It is true that his only surviving work was written before this fatal diversion from his master's opinions took place, and contains the mention of his instructor. But the consciousness of the ensuing change makes us view every sentence with the suspicion of latent disagreement from the opinions which he had received ; and the mention of his master, instead of giving pleasure creates pain, by suggesting how all his care and toil was spent in vain.

Tatian was born on the extreme eastern verge of

the Roman empire, in the province of Mesopotamia¹. Thus the banks of the Euphrates, which had already nursed up one false prophet in Balaam, were now destined to produce another. It was a barbarous province,—but, covered as it was with the wrecks of the civilization of the Assyrian empire, might have fostered in Tatian his natural eagerness of information. Babylon and Nineveh might be contemplated on the spot, amid the melancholy grandeur of their ruins. And he would be continually remanded to ancient writers for the history of the monuments by which he was surrounded. Like his master Justin, he was placed in a very peculiar neighbourhood. The country was the earliest seat of mankind, and was now filled with large and flourishing settlements of Jews. These would present themselves, with their striking peculiarities, wherever he went. But otherwise he remained as ignorant of them as his master had done, in similar circumstances, before him. Immediately around him was heard the Greek tongue, the universal language of civilization in the East. He was not long content with the sounds only of this beautiful tongue, but applied himself with unwearied diligence to its substantial treasures of a brilliant and extensive literature. He carefully perused its poets, historians, orators, and philosophers². To the latter he devoted so much attention, as to enrol himself among their number³: of what sect he became the follower has not been recorded.

But such studies, together perhaps with the eminence which he acquired from them, made him im-

¹ Orat. c. Græc. c. 42.

² Orat. 35.

³ Ib. 19. 26.

patient of the obscurity of his native province. They had both moved his ambition, and had excited his eager curiosity to visit scenes which continually haunted his imagination. The gloomy fens, shapeless ruins, and unrefined people, by which he was surrounded, were in complete contrast with the picture of the native country of the writers with whom he had been so assiduously conversing. The humble and imperfect garb too with which the religion of the Greeks, which was his own and that of his fathers, was clad, would make him long to see it in all its gorgeous dress of games, festivals, and mysteries, upon spots associated with exquisite description, romantic legend, or glorious historical circumstance; and under temples consecrated by the sacredness of the spot, the skill of the architect, and the fame of the founder. Under such a call perhaps, which the event proved to have come from God, Tatian quitted the country of Abraham.

Manifold indeed, and unsearchable, are the ways in which God effects his gracious calls upon the heart of man. As the chemist, in the triumph of his art, makes fire burst forth from water, so the all-knowing Framer of man's mind brings forth in it a result quite contrary to the beginning, and startles us with admiration of the exercise of his power. We may, when recovered from our surprise, analyze the result, and find that no new element is concerned, that the sudden change is produced by regular causes, which we can trace step by step, up to the first burst; but is it less God's own work on that account? Did the man himself dispose his own mind in that peculiar arrangement which has brought about the result?

Or did other men work cunningly upon it with a view continually directed to that end? Or did chance shuffle the heap of ideas into the lucky position? No man, who can duly estimate the blessedness of the result, will ascribe it to any other than the Author of all godliness. Tatian set out on his pilgrimage with views which should confirm his attachment to the superstition which he had followed from his cradle, and he found and embraced the faith of the Gospel. We may conceive the delight with which this curious scholar trod the soil of Greece, and realized the visions in which he had so long indulged. He came upon the scenes which had been immortalized in written monuments, and upon the holy ground of his religion. Every where, as he went on, he busily inquired into the rites and legends of heathenism, and paid his devotions at celebrated festivals and shrines. But how continually are the visions of the imagination disappointed by the reality! The liveliness, the spirituality, the beauty and majesty, which we have been contemplating, with our mental eye, and have studied as types of which we longed to behold the substance, are responded to by grossness and vulgarity. We go on from object to object, and, in despite of the infinite variety which their images had assumed in our minds, we find a dull monotonous repetition of the same forms. Irsomeness comes on, and this soon ends in utter disgust. What is truly excellent having been outdone and made of no account by our previous conceptions, all the worthless part, which never had entered into our notions, comes fresh and in undiminished reality upon our attention,—nay, even obtrudes itself upon

us in magnified features, through the haze of the disappointment with which we now look around us. Such was the change which came over Tatian. It began early, and was gradual, but steady in its progress. It had been more sudden, had not his reverential feeling towards the religion of his country disposed him to much toleration of offence; and it might not have taken place at all, had he been the mere plodding antiquary who confirms his attachment, even to bigotry, to the objects of his study, by the minuteness of his inquiries. Even before he quitted his native Asia, much would shock a mind, which accustomed, most probably, to a poor and simple celebration of rites, was unprepared for the disgusting impurities which attended it among a richer and more luxurious people. Syria might have presented to him the lewd festival of Adonis, —Phrygia, the abominable priests and rites of the mother of the Gods. Whatever instruction he may have gained from the mysteries of Eleusis, its effect would not alleviate the shock which he experienced at the sight of the bloody rites of Diana at Megalopolis, and which was repeated at Rome, where he beheld the offerings of human blood to Jupiter Latiaris ¹.

One after another, the visions of this contemplative scholar broke up before the rude and mortifying reality. His admiration of Greek philosophy had prepared him for seeing in its teachers very different men from the disputatious and sordid tribe, who, with all their profession of having enough within

¹ Orat. 29.

themselves, received from the emperor pensions of 600 pieces of gold for no other service than cherishing a long beard¹. As he past from place to place, he found not only different customs and laws, but even different notions prevalent on vital points of morality². Every where was the filth of wickedness in manifold forms. But his expectations thus disappointed in every quarter, brought him into a train of deep and practical reflection. He discovered the entire absence of truth. If he now recurred to the writings which had created such visions, they appeared in quite a different light. The weaknesses and vices of the ancient philosophers, their dissensions in doctrine accompanied with bitter personal hatred³; the vain endeavours of the allegorists to patch up the revolting absurdities of heathen mythology⁴; these, with many other glaring inconsistencies, forced themselves upon him. In this sorrowful state of mind, he looked about and around, and sought after all that was of good report, if perchance he may find the truth. And seeking it, he found it. He happened to meet with the Holy Scriptures; and their character, so totally opposed to that of the writings with which he was now thoroughly disgusted after long conversation, impressed him at once in their favour. He was taken with the absence of all the boastful trickery of style,—with the simple, unpretending, unstudied delivery of their sentiments by the writers,—with the plain, intelligible, account which they gave of the creation of the

¹ Orat. 19.² Ib. 28.³ Ib. 23. 25.⁴ Ib. 21.

universe,—with the foreknowledge of the future manifested therein,—with the wonderful excellence of the precepts,—with the assertion of the monarchy of God. He cheerfully submitted himself to this divine instruction, and found at once a deliverance from the thralldom of error in which he had hitherto been wandering¹. All was liberty, all was light, all was order, where, throughout his past life, had been the abject slavery of superstition, and where darkness, perplexity, and confusion had balked every attempt at knowledge, both human and divine.

Still God had not yet worked out the fund of the gracious help which He intended for him. He further introduced him to a master who should finish what had been so happily begun, and Justin Martyr was the chosen instrument of his purpose. Once thus brought together, these friends had very much more in common than generally serves to cement the union of friendship. Both had been ardent students in Greek literature—both had enrolled themselves on the list of philosophers—both had earnestly sought the truth, and had conceived a disgust at the vanity of their former pursuits. And their similarity of circumstances soon placed both in a similarity of peril. The accession to the Christian cause of another philosopher, in Tatian, increased the perplexity and indignation which the conversion of Justin had raised among their late brethren of the beard and cloak, who, grown insolent with the high prosperity which they were so undeservedly enjoying under the bigotted Marcus, were in no humour

¹ Orat. 29.

to put up with such an affront. We have seen how successful they were in their attempts upon the life of Justin. Tatian doubtless was the companion of the last hours of his master. How precious would have been his record of them—what a gap would it have filled up in our broken conceptions of such a scene! Having ever stood upon Christian ground, we can enter but a little way into the thoughts and feelings of those who have come upon it from elsewhere. We are men as different as he that has been born and brought up in a country happy in climate, in appearance to the eye, in production for support of life, and in polity, from him who has arrived from an unhealthy, barren, and barbarous land. We have no deep contrast of past and of remote. Compared with them, we are as the man who has consciousness alone to him that has memory also. Let us, however, conceive the long darkness first broken by a desire of something better, which the bosom felt must exist, but knew not where it did exist, and this desire, long protracted and at last fulfilled, to be now on the point of enjoying that of which all its previous satisfaction had been but a foretaste. Let us conceive the understanding, long darkened, become conscious of its exceeding exaltation from Philosophy to the Gospel, and now on the point of being lifted up to its earnest and unattainable object, the estimate of the height and the depth of God's mercy and power. Let us conceive the imagination, purified from heathen superstition by the washing of the word of life, and now on the point of realizing all its visions of holiness and beauty. Such would be the topics of conversation to these

two friends, one of whom was on the point of departure from the world, the other was in constant expectation of his summons. Compare with this the prison-scene of Socrates,—recollect his discourse on the immortality of the soul, the sophistical arguments by which he endeavoured to prove it, and the miserably faint hope with which he concluded his speculation. How does the blessedness of the Gospel shine forth from this contrast! And yet some perverse men can prefer the darkness to light.

Thus Tatian lost a faithful guide, of which he had by no means outgrown the want. His deficiency, however, had not yet manifested itself, and he succeeded his master both in conducting instruction, and in defending the faith. He began with eminent success in both. From his school proceeded Rhodon, a useful writer against the heresies of his day¹, whom he happily sent forth to maintain the succession of the faithful teachers, before he himself had lost his place in the chain by breaking away into heresy. His written work professed to shew the superior excellence of the Christian religion, and for this purpose he proves how all the boasted inventions of the Greeks were borrowed and abused: that their philosophy, in particular, was faulty in precept and practice,—and, together with all their arts, was posterior to Moses. He defends Christianity against the usual calumnies, which he retorts upon the accusers, and dilates at some length upon the grand articles of the fall of man, his free will, the resurrection, the Logos, the nature of the soul. This

¹ Euseb. H. E. v. 13.

treatise abounds with curious information with regard to the state of philosophy at the time, on the subject of their games and spectacles, on the notions entertained concerning demons, their nature and operation, and we are agreeably presented with a view of the different treatment which the practice of the Gospel was already procuring for the female sex. The Greeks treated their women with as little ceremony as do the Mahomedans at this day, and derided the Christians as trifling their time among boys and girls, women and old men. In reply, he taunts them with the honours which they paid to immodest women, by erecting statues to them, of which he gives a long and curious list, together with the names of the sculptors¹. Unconnected and discursive though it be, this work is written in parts with great force, and with much pungent satire upon the philosophers, and heathen practices and superstitions. It cannot but have added much to the effect of its predecessors, and detached the heathen mind still more from its reverence to former objects, disgusting it by the unvarnished tale of Pagan folly and superstition, which became more glaring from the light of purity thrown forth in his account of Christian doctrine and practice. At the same time, the Christians had an answer put into their mouths; and if the worst cause is content if it can but give an answer, however really weak that may be, we may imagine the satisfaction of the Christians in being enabled to repel the usual charges brought against them with such strong argument, and to

¹ c. 33.

retort with such severe truth and biting ridicule. The dignity of the Christian cause cannot but have been raised in the eyes of the world.

We have now come to the end of Tatian's services to the Church. This, as it was the most signal, was also the last. Some, indeed, have thought that they could discern in it the traces of his future heresy¹. But nothing is more easy than to detect suspicious or erroneous expressions in the text of an author, whose opinions we have already prejudged. And the works of Justin himself, had he fallen off, would have been quite as open to such perverse interpretation². On the other hand, nothing can be more distinct than his assertion of some points of orthodoxy which he afterwards renounced. For instance, he asserts that we know God from his works, and comprehend the *invisible* exercise of his power through the visible³: He assigns the creation of *matter* itself, as well as of the world, to the Word⁴: He maintains the resurrection of the *body*⁵: declares that God was *incarnate*, and that he *suffered*⁶: and ascribes evil to the operation of demons⁷. Such assertions could not have been made by one who had the slightest taint of Gnosticism. Still, however, this work will assist us in unravelling the process of his change of opinions. We infer from it that he had a remarkably curious and inquisitive spirit; and this was a disposition ex-

¹ Cave's account of Tatian in his *Histor. Literar.*

² For example, his expression in *Apol. i. 10*. "God in the beginning made all things out of shapeless matter." See too *c. 59. 67*.

³ *Orat. 4.*

⁴ *Ib. 5. 12.*

⁵ *Ib. 6. 25.*

⁶ *Ib. 13. 21.*

⁷ *Ib. 17.*

ceedingly prone to run into the vagaries of heresy¹, which, indeed, originated from it. The bounds set to the revelation of Jesus Christ are too limited for so prying a mind. The Gospel did not solve the grand problem of the reason of the existence of evil. Further, we can discover that Tatian wanted that good sense and sound judgment which should have told him at once not to expect the solution of such a question; and would have made him acknowledge that human nature is quite inadequate to the reception of a revelation on the point, still less could work it out by its own faculties. His work, while it shows great reading, betrays also, in its very defective arrangement, a student who had not duly digested into order, by reflection, the materials of his study as they accumulated upon him. His store of reading had gone very far beyond his power of meditative arrangement. Thus beginning with a curiosity which was too eager to wait for discrimination, he lost all power of discrimination amid the gathered mass. It must be confessed, however, that his master is liable to the same charge. It is, indeed, the vice of a long-established literature, and prepares the way for its fall. The number of books has become too great; and, by the indiscriminate perusal, originality of mind, and discriminating judgment, are lost. Hence the learned but feeble-minded scholars of the Byzantine Empire. Hence the prevalence of the Gnostics at this time. But Justin had qualities which withheld him from running the length of the course, as Tatian did. He had that native meekness of mind

¹ See Tertull. de Præscript. Hær. c. 8.

which, if it be not good sense itself, does all the work of good sense. But Tatian had, with a prying but not profound mind, its almost invariable accompaniment of vanity. Hence that perverseness which will not abide by common rule, or proceed on the usual road. The result of such a state of mind is, in all cases, one of utter unprofitableness, in most, of serious error. While the man of good sense and clear judgment knows intuitively, as it were, not only where to look for his object, but also where not to look ; where search would be fruitless, and Nature says, "thus far, and no farther ;" and therefore reserves all his powers for the working of one or two profitable veins : such men as Tatian hurry after all alike, push into dreamy speculations : they work hard at a vein which can never yield them profit. They are, indeed, ever busy, ever bustling, everywhere making themselves conspicuous in the mine ; but they never bring up ore ; nay, they will even prefer breaking the barren, unpromising rock, which all else have past by, for the chance of finding, rather than work a vein of which the ordinary marks are evident upon the surface. They despise anything ordinary. Thus Tatian, uninformed, and uncorrected by due insight into his own mind, and rich in a store of learning which he could not manage, became vain, perverse, paradoxical, heretical. But it is due to him to observe, that he is honourably distinguished from many heretics, in his doctrine not being the result of an unclean heart. It was rather a defect of the head, arising, indeed, from its too little communication with the heart. But hence, also, his heresy was more widely dangerous. Others,

like rattlesnakes, gave warning by impure morals : but his might be taken into the bosom before it stung. Such heresies as these latter are they that we have especially to guard against in our days. Such as inculcate impure morals will have few, if any, followers, except in a society mixed with heathenism, as in the days of the Gnostics, or where Christianity has degenerated through the neglect of the government in attending to the moral and spiritual state of the people. But in times when the wide and passive reception of knowledge is mistaken for the rare and active power which has imparted it, and a most false presumption is formed of mental superiority, the latter species of heresy finds its peculiar *nidus*, and every one should be on the watch against it, both for himself and for his neighbour.

By such a process of degeneracy, Tatian came down to that perverted frame of mind in which he set to work as the founder of a new religious system. But he was unable to invent any novel element ; and thus was less original than any of his predecessors, all his materials having been already employed in the Gnostic service. His patchwork, therefore, will not require much examination. He borrowed from Valentinus his troop of *Æons*, intermediate between the supreme God and the Demiurge¹, differing, however, so far as to make the latter aware of the existence of the former ; so as to pronounce at the creation the words, " Let there be light," in the

¹ Irenæus, i. 30, 31. (Ed. Grabe). Euseb. H. E. iv. 29. Clem. Alex. Strom. iii. 92.

sense of a prayer, and not of a commandment¹. With his predecessors, also, he considered the Jewish law as proceeding from the latter being, and, therefore, discarded the Old Testament². He adopted from Marcion his opinions on the sin of marriage³, commanded abstinence from animal food and wine, and went so far as to celebrate the Eucharist with water, whence the term *Hydroparastatæ*, or *Water-exhibitors*, was applied to his followers, besides the title of *Encratitæ*, or *Continents*⁴. He denied also the salvation of Adam, as having been the beginner of marriage, and propagator of the body⁵.

We are apt to expect that, when their own work does not alarm men in the act, yet that it should in the consequences, when passion has cooled, and the nature of the deed has begun clearly to manifest itself. This, except in examples of extraordinary infatuation, is almost always the case. But far different is it with regard to our intellectual misdeeds. There is no one whom it is so difficult to convince of his error by deductions from his principles as the maker of a system. He is proud of his creation, and the more so in proportion to its extravagance, because he has gone further out of the beaten road for it. He will not, therefore, be robbed of his pride and glory without a violent struggle. He is his own worshipper; and if worship paid to any being that

¹ Clem. Alex. Eclog. Prophet. fragm. 38.

² Clem. Alex. Strom. iii. 82.

³ Iren. ib. See Tatian's tenet discussed in Clem. Alex. Strom. iii. 81. et seq.

⁴ Theodoret. Hæret. Fab. i. 20.

⁵ Iren. ib. who refutes him in iii. 34, 35. 39. (Ed. Grabe).

is under God cannot but lead into impious absurdity, of what folly or impiety may not the worshipper of himself admit? What consequences of his darling opinions will startle him? He will, in the first place, dispute the legitimacy of the deduction urged against him; and even when compelled to admit that, he will not admit of the practical mischief. His worldly mind and weak judgment have never traced moral consequences in the practice of daily life, in which all things seem to him to go much at random, for good or for bad, and, rather than part with them, he is quite content to leave his own doctrines to the same chance. The self-satisfaction of the present hour is always ready to leave the future to provide for itself.

To such a conclusion have we followed this learned, and once faithful man. He presents a signal example of what the world has too often seen realized in the scholar, namely, the effect of the vanity of a curious mind operating upon a feeble judgment. To such a mind extent of information only extends the range of the sources of error, at the very same time that it inflames its vanity, and stimulates its rashness. From the absence of the rule of a discriminating power, the vast quantity of accumulated detail, instead of being duly distributed, and marshalled, as it were, under proper heads, gathers tumultuously, like an undisciplined crowd, round the leading principle of error, and strengthens it with numbers. "Much learning doth make thee mad," said Festus to Paul; and although mistaken in his particular application, the blunt and practical Roman was not wrong in his notions of the effect of mere

learning. Many, with Tatian, have abandoned the doctrines of Paul from the very defect which Festus imputed to him, and the errors and absurdities of learned men have too often brought discredit upon learning itself.

But Tatian, no more than his predecessors, could stay here. Simon, and perhaps others, needed not, at their early period, to care much about reconciling their statements with the Scriptures of the New Testament¹. But at a later period, when these were generally known and received according to an acknowledged canon, Marcion had been obliged to refer directly to them, and of course to offer them violence. Tatian was compelled to a similar step, and presents, together with him, a wonderful instance of men pursuing their course of error, though self-condemned by the expedients to which it drives them. They confessed by the very act that Scripture, as it stood, was against them. They could show no valid reason why it should not so stand. But not even God's will and word was to be allowed when it was in the way of their own. Had an angel from heaven put the Scripture into their hands they would have disputed its integrity. So able is man to withhold his belief, even under a consciousness of the weakness of his reasons, whenever it is opposed to a darling system of his own invention, or to the indulgence of his ruling passion. That a man should be urged to this impiety is an awful proof of the

¹ Valentinus seems to have cared comparatively little about it. See Tertull. Præscr. Hær. 38. He quoted them for support, rather than altered them for their contradiction to him.

judgment of God having already come upon him. That he should abide in it, as most of these heretics did to the last, is a dreadful example of the fact that the Holy Spirit may abandon his temple for ever.

Tatian, in this sacrilegious undertaking, went much more cunningly to work than his predecessor. His ingenious device is the earliest example of a class of works which have since been undertaken for much more holy purposes. He combined the four gospels into one continuous history, after the fashion of what is now called a harmony, though not to the same fulness and accuracy. This, by a happy fancy, he called a *Diatessaron*¹, a musical term, denoting the 4th, which held the same fundamental position in Greek music that the 3rd does in modern². Thus he was enabled to omit, without any glaring token of the defect, the two genealogies, and whatever passage else declared Jesus to be of the seed of David according to the flesh³. So little, indeed, was the trick suspected, that 250 years after Theodoret found above 200 copies of it in the churches of his diocese, it having been used by the orthodox as an useful compendious work.

(A.D. 172.) The adoption of these sentiments, into which the vanity, arising from his succeeding to

¹ Euseb. H. E. iv. 29. There is much dispute about the present existence of this. See Lardner, vol. ii. p. 417, &c. and the authors given at the end of Valesius's note on this passage in Heinichen's edition of Eusebius's History of the Church.

² Irenæus might have added this to his fanciful reasons in iii. 11. p. 221. (Ed. Grabe) for there being neither more nor less than four Gospels.

Theodoret. Hær. Fab. i. 20.

the place of Justin, and from the applause following his great treatise, seems to have precipitated him, was posterior to his leaving Rome. He had turned his steps homewards, disseminating his doctrines through the East as he went, and trod that ground as a Gnostic over which he had formerly past as a heathen. In that former journey he was on his road to the Gospel, and now he was on his road from it. But places, which he would otherwise have regarded with thankful consciousness of the very different frame of mind in which he now revisited them, had little interest to excite in a mind which had but exchanged one school of human philosophy for another. With the usual proselytizing spirit of heretics, who, with the secret misgiving of error, wish to embark as many as possible in the same perilous ship with themselves, he preached from province to province, and no where more successfully than in the native country of the Apostle of the Gentiles; thus overthrowing, as it were with a spiteful spirit, the faith which that preacher had established with such joy and love. When he reached his native land he set up his school there¹, and spread, as from a centre, his poison through a country already morbid. He became the head of a sect which prevailed for a long time in those parts, where Epiphanius afterwards found them, especially in Pisidia, and Phrygia the Burnt (a district well deserving that name, says he, as burnt up with heresy). They prevailed, also, in proconsular Asia, in Isauria, Pamphylia, Cilicia, Galatia, and even at Antioch, and at

¹ Epiphan. Hær. 46.

Rome¹. The mischief would have been greater still had not Tatian's country raised up at the same time the more highly-gifted Bardesanes, who, having formerly adopted the opinions of Valentinus, had the grace given him to cast them off, and to make ample amends by a vigorous opposition to heresy, which he maintained by writings in his native Syriac².

Thus we have followed Tatian through his unequal course back to the place whence he first came into notice. There history leaves him. How and when he died has not been recorded. Whether he repented of his errors is now known only to Him who has power to forgive the penitent. In his unwearied industry he left a large body of writings behind him³, of which, fortunately perhaps for his fame, there now survives only his celebrated treatise. It is impossible to read this without great interest. Not only is it filled with much curious detail of early Christian opinion and practice, and of heathen antiquity, expressed in a style which is copious and select in choice of words, but it affects us with a respectful pity, as we bear in mind the fate of the gifted writer. We are struck with that kind of melancholy which we feel on gazing at the picture of a beautiful woman, illustrious from her misfortunes no less than from her rank. We dwell with delight upon her open brow of gladness, her clear, intelligent eye, her sweet smile at an admiring world impressed upon her face; and in the next moment we reflect upon her after days of darkness and distress, when her

¹ Epiphan. Hær. 47.

³ Ibid.

² Euseb. H. E. iv. 30.

smiles were turned into tears, her gay robes into weeds of mourning. Then we begin to think that we detect the cause of her misfortunes in some peculiar expression of the countenance, indicative of that point of character in which her weakness lay. So it is, when, in our admiration of this work, we reflect, as we read, that this truth was afterwards abandoned, that perverted, this replaced by its opposite error, and that the great store of learning which he brings to the defence of his holy cause involved the reason of his fall from the truth. Our meditation ends in sorrowful reflection; we acknowledge with a sigh the frailty of our nature, and inquire of ourselves, whether we may not have within us similar elements of spiritual ruin. He challenges us to a keen and unsparing self-examination, for he exhibits no grossly palpable cause, which those that run may read, for his falling off. He did not embrace heresy from an impure mind, like Marcus and Carpocrates, nor from the spitefulness of wounded pride, like Valentinus and Marcion, but rather from infirmity than corruption of heart, and from defect of judgment as much as from indulgence in a wrong feeling. The process of tracing his declension from the truth affects the thinker much in the same way as the description of a disease does the man, who feels, as he hears, some of its symptoms within himself, and experiences fear where he had never feared before. He himself is now maintaining the truth. But has he never experienced the reluctance of abandoning for it some original conception of his mind, or some novel combination of ideas, which have afforded him, as their framer, infinite delight? Has he never felt

further the struggle of vanity which prompted him to publish these proofs of his talent to the world, in despite of his consciousness of the mischief which they may cause to the truth in the mind of the reader? What privileged exemption from error has he which Tatian had not, or which a still greater than he, Solomon, had not? He must lay his conscience bare before God, not only as to whether his imagination be clean or unclean, but whether his opinions be true or untrue, remembering that the truth is with every man as a sacred deposit of which he will have to render a strict account on the last day before Him that is the very truth. May we all, "having been enriched by him in all knowledge, even as the testimony of Christ has been confirmed in us, so that we come behind in no gift, may we be so confirmed unto the end, that we may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ¹."

¹ 1 Cor. i. 5.

DIONYSIUS OF CORINTH.

Effects of chance in the preservation of literary works—Distress of the Church of Corinth—Relief from Rome—Answer of Dionysius to Soter—Universal inspection of the Bishops of his days—Spiritual regeneration of Greece—His letter to the Church of Lacedæmon—To the Church of Athens—To the Churches of Asia Minor and Crete—Difficulties with the Heretics—Spectacle presented by the Church in his day.

IN turning over the records of the past, we are more than ever struck with the whimsical partiality of fortune, or, rather, in other words, with the carelessness of mankind. We find large and numerous works extant which we could very patiently have lost, and have ample accounts concerning men about whom we can feel no interest. On the contrary, we are presented with a few scanty fragments of noble volumes, which would have instructed and delighted us, at the same time that they would fling a clear and steady light upon the history of the age; and we can recover but a few anecdotes, or mere traits of character of men who were both eminent and excellent, and would have furnished noble models for study and imitation. That inequality in the distri-

bution of merit which pervades a living generation of men, pervades also successions of men,—it is found not only along the surface of the world of the day, but also goes through the depth of the world of days to come. It is humiliating to think by what mere accidents some of the noblest and of the meanest productions of man have reached us. And these furnish a sad example of the barbarous incuriosity and ignorance through which we have lost so many of their fellows. If we will imagine a library thrown promiscuously down from an upper room through a chimney of one of our old houses, which is full of corners and recesses, to find its way by the fireplace to a room at the bottom, we shall have a fair idea of the transmission of the literature of one distant age to another. So great is the care of mankind in the preservation of its intellectual treasures.

Such is the half-angry feeling excited in the bosom on ending the perusal of the brief remains of the letters of Dionysius of Corinth. They are just sufficient to show their interesting nature, and to suggest his admirable character. A mere sketch of either is all that the mind can now either conceive or communicate.

We know nothing of him before he succeeded Primus in the episcopal chair at Corinth¹. He was fortunate in receiving from his predecessor a Church well instituted in sound doctrine, after it had been so long notorious for the contrary. It had now come

¹ Compare Euseb. iv. 22, 23. The latter chapter contains all that is known about him.

into port, like one of the vessels of its city, after having been long and severely tossed by the storms of the Adriatic. Conscious that they were celebrated through Christendom much more for their schisms and heresies than for any brilliant services done to the Catholic Church, its members would enjoy much self-gratulation on its present state, and both shepherd and sheep would diligently exert themselves for the maintenance of tranquillity. This good resolution was confirmed by a superintendence which they could not dispute or resist. God chastised them with a share of the persecution which raged under Marcus Aurelius throughout the empire. Dionysius saw his flock miserably ravaged; and yet he might truly congratulate himself that the wolf was from without, and not from within. Since the Christians were put by the emperor, as we have seen, in a state of outlawry, they became the objects of a hatred and rapacity, of which, as proceeding from purely heathen hearts, we can perhaps scarcely form an adequate conception. Grievous poverty and distress pervaded the Church; and Dionysius experienced all the wretched feeling of the parent who hears the cries of his famished children and is unable to relieve them.

(A. D. 171.) In the midst of their sufferings they were relieved by a seasonable help from a quarter whence they had always received the kindest assistance. The Church of Rome, which had formerly used her good offices under Clement to relieve her spiritual necessities by composing her quarrels, now sent to the Church of Corinth to relieve her bodily necessities, under Soter, her present bishop. No

one was more likely to feel this exercise of abundant charity with greater liveliness than Dionysius, who would have been the first man to exercise it himself, had he possessed the means. What a just and thankful steward would he be! On the Lord's day, when his whole flock met together, and reposed in the arms of the great Shepherd from the weariness of a harassing world, he caused Soter's letter to be read publicly in the congregation. Delightful must have been the feelings with which it was heard by those who had received, or would shortly receive, such great benefits from it. It was as the sound of water to the thirsty traveller, who hears it with exceeding joy before he comes to it, and with thankful delight when he has refreshed himself from its stream. They came to it with every preparation for joy and thankfulness; for they had met to partake of the Lord's body and blood¹, to represent themselves as one with Him in the mystical loaf, and in Him with the whole Church of angels above and saints below, to pray for the whole Church, and especially for those more nearly connected with them, and to offer thanksgiving for the many and manifold gifts to body and soul. To hearts thus overflowing with joyful love, Dionysius read the letter of his brother Soter. When the congregation had broken up, Dionysius, with his bosom warm with divine love, wrote an answer, which is doubly interesting, as containing

¹ See Justin Martyr, *Apol.* i. 67, whence we see that it was the practice of the early Church to communicate every Sunday at least.

the only fragment which remains of all his writings. It runs (as far as extant) as follows, being addressed to the Church of Rome through Soter.

“For this has been your custom from the first, to do good to all brethren in various ways, and to send supplies of necessities to numerous churches in every city, not only relieving the poverty of the brethren in want here, but also ministering to the need of brethren in the mines¹: maintaining thus, Romans as you are, a Roman custom handed down to you from your fathers; which your blessed Bishop Soter has not only kept, but extended, both by supplying the abundance, which is in the act of distribution, to the saints, and by comforting with blessed words, as an affectionate father would his children, the brethren who arrive at Rome. To day, then, is the Lord’s day, and on it we have read your letter, from which we shall ever have to reap instruction by reading it, as we do that former one of yours which was written to us through Clement². Wherefore ye too, by means of your exhortation, which ye have given us at such length and so excellent, have again joined into one that which was planted as one by Peter and Paul. For both of them came to our Corinth and planted us here, and taught us equally. And equally they taught in Italy, going thither together, and suffered martyrdom at the

¹ See Valesius’s note. Tertullian also, *Apol.* 39, mentions subscriptions for these unhappy brethren.

² For the custom of reading writings, not Scriptural, in churches, see Bingham’s *Antiquities*, xiv. 3. 14.

same period. For on brethren requesting me to write letters, I wrote them, and these the apostles of the Devil filled with tares, taking some things out, and putting others in ; against whom the woe ! is ordained ¹. We need not wonder, indeed, that some men have attempted to adulterate the Scriptures of the Lord, when they make such attempts upon writings not of that rank."

Such is a portion of the letter of Dionysius to a church which truly proved that sisterhood which it had received from the same fathers, Peter and Paul. It is most edifying to see those two celebrated churches exchanging under their respective bishops the Christian feeling of noble-minded charity on one side, and of thankfulness, no less noble-minded, on the other ; and still more are we moved with admiration, when we cast a look down into the degeneracy of following ages, and see the ministers of the Greek and Latin churches fulminating anathemas against each other from their very altars. So indissolubly is pure, undefiled faith linked with the true charity, that not only bestows goods upon the poor, but suffereth long ; and corrupt doctrine with envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness.

The brunt of this persecution being past, Dionysius had leisure again to raise his eyes from the intent inspection of domestic matters, and to look to the welfare of his neighbours. It is a lovely trait of the unsuspicious, because unfeigned, charity of the better ages of the Church, that the bishops did not confine their view within the pale of their own

¹ Revelations.

diocese, but considering themselves as having an interest in the welfare of the whole body, they did not hesitate to exercise doctrinal exhortation, though not ecclesiastical discipline, in a diocese not their own, and that their brother pastors, so far from deeming this a meddling intrusion, accepted it with thanks¹. Where all are earnestly intent upon a good work, they are glad to have each other's assistance in every possible way. It is not until neglect has crept in that such interference can appear like an intrusion and a reproach, and that even the zealous labourer feels himself called upon to assert at once his character and his privilege. Reason could then be reconciled with charity to its farthest extent. The shepherd (they might argue) who has securely folded his own flock would yet be far deficient in the whole of his duty did he stand idly by, and see a brother's flock worried by the wolf, or scattered in the wilderness, even did the sheep belong to a different master. But here the sheep belonged all to one owner, and the shepherds had a common master in Christ. They were bound, therefore, as fellow-servants, to yield to one another all the help in their power. With such a view this faithful servant of the good Shepherd, whenever he had leisure from the security of his own flock, would look out from his hill over the general pasture to see if haply he might bring succour in time of need. We cannot contemplate this his view without a feeling of deep and singular interest. The ancient rival states of Greece had long sunk with all their glory into the

¹ See Bingham's *Antiq.* ii. 5.

general mass of corruption and slavishness which had first subjugated, and then kept them in irretrievable subjection to the tyranny of Rome. But in the letters of Dionysius we are suddenly presented with an example of spiritual regeneration, by which Athens, Corinth, and Lacedæmon again become names of interest. On hearing them the scholar thinks of their rival, turbulent, and iniquitous republics, and, lo! he beholds friendly and holy churches exchanging with each other, in all the liberty of the Gospel, offices of love and charity, cementing alliances of pure faith, having for their magistrates men of holiness and peace, for their factious assemblies devout congregations, for their laws the precepts of Christ, for their common bond of diets, oracles, and games, one council through one spirit, the oracles of Divine truth, and the race, and the wrestling, and the crown of Christian faith and holiness. They were so many beautiful images of the new Jerusalem, rising out of the ruins of their political predecessors. Dionysius could not be ignorant of the history of his country, and this remarkable change in its aspect must often have given rise to deep and serious thoughts in such a bosom.

There was but too much occasion for his interference. Heresy was especially rife in the Greek cities, where it was supplied with such plentiful aliment by their philosophy. This darling offspring of human wisdom every where maintained a violent struggle with divine truth, and whenever it found open resistance useless, began to assail it by secret opposition. It sought to corrupt the doctrines which it could not suppress. It had obtained foot-

ing, and was ready to dispute the ground with Christianity in every quarter, however formerly unlikely. Even the spirit of the institutions of Lycurgus, adverse as they were to every speculative and literary pursuit, had long ago given place to this subtle insinuating spirit, and the Gospel of Christ was not the first irruption of an utter destroyer of those ordinances, and of that national frame of mind which the Legislator had fondly thought to secure for the independence of his countrymen through ages to come. The ancient intercourse of friendship which had subsisted between the states of Corinth and Lacedæmon, now that these states were no more, was revived between their churches, and from that isthmus, where their armies had been wont to meet, and march together to put down Attic ambition, a warning voice now came forth to tell the Church of Lacedæmon that the Attic foe, in the shape of her philosophy, was already at her gates. Dionysius wrote to instruct her in sound doctrine, and to recommend peace and unity.

But Dionysius had not only to admonish the Church of the ancient ally of his country, but also to advise that of its former inveterate enemy. Athens called aloud for his interference. The martyrdom of its Bishop Publius (who seems to have succeeded Dionysius the Areopagite) had left his flock so scattered, and the degeneracy from holy conversation had become such, that they were within but a little of apostacy from the word of the Gospel. The zeal of the next Bishop Quadratus had, however, brought them together again, and revived the lamp of their faith. The exhortation of a man so

revered as Dionysius would come most opportunely, and very probably it was at the suggestion of Quadratus himself that he wrote a letter to stir them up to a lively faith and evangelical practice. Thus the Churches of Greece emerge to our eyes in a flash of light through the fame of this saint, and are then lost again in the darkness of obscurity.

The bounds of Greece were not the limit of the view of this eagle-eyed pastor. He looked beyond the Ægean, and, seeing the Church of Nicomedia vexed by the heresy of Marcion, presented her by letter with the rule of truth whereby to walk. The Church of Amastris too, in the neighbouring province of Pontus, solicited his advice through its members, Bacchylides and Elpistus. It appears to have exercised under its bishop, Palma, too rigid a discipline respecting marriage, and in matters of incontinency, forestalling (it would seem) the austerities of the Montanists, and approaching too nearly to the ascetic rule of the Marcionites. This, together with their severity towards their lapsed brethren, whose re-admission they made a matter of too great difficulty, drew from him some friendly advice, in which he displayed the wisdom and mildness of charity which governed his counsels in his own diocese. For he recommended a relaxation of their rigour on these points, and fortified his authority as an adviser by an interpretation of passages of Holy Scripture. But a greater tribute than all these was paid to his character by the Churches of Crete, which, represented under Philip, the Bishop of Gortyna, the capital of the island, submitted to his exhortations. They had been carefully nursed up in the truth by their

founder Paul, who had afterwards commissioned Titus with episcopal powers to regulate their polity, and confirm them in sound doctrine. Notwithstanding, however, the foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, which the Apostle intended thus to provide against, found an entrance, and the heretic, in spite of admonition and expulsion, assailed its faith¹. Philip himself had been called upon to assert the truth against Marcion², and the spiritual darts of Gortyna had been found as sharp and piercing as those of wood and iron, for which she was famous in song³. Nor had this Church been found unworthy of the extraordinary care of the Apostles. She had fought a good fight and often, during the late persecutions. Dionysius congratulated her on the many proofs which she had given of her fortitude, and renewed the advice of the Apostle (now so necessary every where) to beware of the perversions of the heretics. The Church of Gnosus also experienced the vigilance of his provision. Under her bishop, Pinytus, she was enforcing too rigorously the ascetic rules, which seem now to have been coming into general favour in the Eastern Church. Dionysius remonstrated against this severity, and advised her not to impose upon the brethren a yoke which they were too weak to bear.

Pinytus, in an answer which showed his soundness of faith, thanked Dionysius in terms of high admiration, and besought him to write again, not confining himself to mere elements, and food for babes

¹ Ep. Titus iii. 9, 10.

² Euseb. H. E. iv. 25.

³ *Æneid* xi. 773, &c.

in Christ, but giving his flock more solid food. Whence appears the rate at which Dionysius valued the Christian knowledge and understanding of such as gave in to these austerities, which within two centuries terminated in the follies of monkery.

Thus did this admirable bishop, posted upon his spiritual hill, survey, like the centinel upon Acro-Corinthus, the wide horizon of the Church of Christ, and keep himself in continual readiness for carrying help to any quarter of distress. He neither slumbered nor slept, and the commanding position of his see, receiving or dispatching sojourners and voyagers by her two ports—one on the western, and the other on the eastern sea—would supply opportunities which he, of all men, was least likely to neglect. We have an instance of the minute detail into which his inspection went, and see how the very lively stones of the temples of the Lord had his care no less than the entire buildings themselves. Like Paul and John, he did not confine his correspondence to Catholic epistles, but addressed individuals also, among whom is preserved the name of Chrysophora, a sister in Christ.

He was a shining light amid the darkness of the great difficulties which now beset the Church. Without was the scourge of the cruel persecution of Marcus Aurelius ; within was the serpentlike insinuation of the Gnostic heresy. To him the ramping roaring lion was a far less dreaded enemy than the serpent in the bosom. We have already seen the indefatigable and unscrupulous machinations of the heretics, in the treatment which he says his own

letters experienced at their hands. He could not depend upon their circulating for any time or distance without being corrupted by them on their way. Irenæus alludes to the same treatment of his writings¹. It was not indeed likely that men who did not spare even the words of the Lord, should withhold their adulterating hands from those of his servants. But what a dreadful picture does it present of the extremities to which the dishonesty of heresy will go, and of the difficulties with which such men as Dionysius had to contend. He could not be certain that the least communication by writing to the brethren might not be turned, in its way, into the most deadly spiritual poison, and he might be made to curse where he meant to bless, and to blaspheme the Lord whom he adored. Such fraudulent enmity is much more intolerable than open attack. In the latter, a clear testimony can at all events be borne to the truth: in the former it is falsified at once. All confidence is destroyed. The drawn sword of persecution could be provided against, but when neither meat nor drink could be taken by the besieged Church without fear of poison, the times were trying indeed; and such men as Dionysius, bearing up with fortitude and sound judgment against a host of foes, within and without, command our respectful admiration. Brief though his history may be, for want of records, yet it has opened to us a beautiful prospect of the Church, which shines the brighter for the surrounding darkness. It opens to us the

¹ Euseb. H. E. v. 20.

sight of a company of holy men—Dionysius, Soter, Palma, Pinytus; each watching at his post, sleepless and immoveable, the representatives to us of innumerable others, whose vigilance and labours lie in the darkness of time awaiting the revelation of the last day. These partial and transitory bursts of light unveil to us sufficient to extend our conception to the grand whole, and the imagination can never dismiss the spectacle, before a deep sense of thankfulness has been raised for the long series of glorious mercies with which God has never ceased to adorn his Church,—for the many faithful shepherds which, ever as they were most needed, he has given it,—for the many and various gifts, with which, according to the occasion, he has endowed them. Our minds are encouraged to look forward with certain hope to the future, undismayed by any darkness which may intervene.

Dionysius has left the only name of any note which the Church of Corinth can boast; and the fact shows us the lamentable effects of schism in obscuring the glory, no less than in corrupting the faith, of a Church. Where are now those noisy and factious brawlers, who sought fame and profit by tearing asunder the bonds of charity, who on their narrow stage and in their little day exalted themselves by resisting authorities and reviling dignities? Their memory instantly sank into the dark oblivious receptacle of the fame of knaves and fools. Happy for them, if one great day should never revive it.

Authentic records leave us uncertain of the fate of Dionysius. But if he was not actually a martyr

in the body, his name can well dispense with the glory of a crown which was too frequently awarded to the only act by which the person had earned any distinction. His whole life would have been a series of acts of spiritual martyrdom.

HEGESIPPUS.

Importance of the study of Christian antiquity—Cause of Hegesippus's tour of inquiry—His visit at Corinth—At Rome—Character of his lost work—Reflections on his tour.

THE study of antiquity, if pursued in the proper spirit, cannot but be a most profitable study. The mere collection indeed of dead facts, and of obsolete fragments, is as useless as it is foolish ; but when it is accompanied by a spirit, which by means of these materials can cement the present times to the past, illustrate by the show the peculiarity of his period, and draw reasonable omens respecting the future, it is both useful and wise. The remote genealogy, the antique weapon, the ruinous pile, the grass-grown entrenchment, worthless though they may seem as objects of investigation to eyes which are content to judge from the mere passing and outward appearance of things, and to minds which turn into vulgar ridicule all which they cannot understand, yet are to the more highly-gifted powerful excitements to reflection, and become efficacious materials of thought.

They are the homely-looking harbingers of a brilliant procession of ideas—they resemble those quaint and soberly-clad domestics by whom we are sometimes guided through a palace, and introduced to rooms hung with famous pictures, and furnished with royal magnificence. The rusty arrow-head, dug up in the turfy trench, will carry such a mind into long and interesting scenes of contemplation; and whole nations of mankind, the extinct introducing to the unborn, will march, with their various attributes of language, habits, and destiny, before his mental eye. The fragment of a frieze or column will suggest in a mere turn of the chisel, which to common eyes seems accidental, a whole period of history, teeming with events and characters. And a rude cankered coin will throw a flash of abiding light on some point where the darkness had hitherto been impenetrable.

If such be the case in the fleeting things of this world, what must it be in the case of the things of the world to come. To the Christian antiquary such investigations must ever terminate in some glorious view opened to the head, and in some deep affection implanted in the heart. At the least a more accurate knowledge of the position which he occupies, as to time and place, in the Church of God, and a consequent sense of thankfulness and responsibility, will be the fruits of his meditation. Employed in the investigation of the successions of the priests, of the manuscripts of the chartulary, of the ancient vaults and substructure of the temple of God's Church, he has ever the foundation of his faith before him. Even minds, which have been but little

affected by the Spirit of Christ, have confessed the extraordinary fascination of this study, and the antiquities of the Christian Church, in rite, doctrine, and discipline, have irresistibly engaged the understanding and imagination of men, even where they have failed to inculcate the lesson which they so vividly exhibit. What then must it be to those hearts which are open to the lesson? The next best gift to prophecy is a clear spiritual retrospect of the past. In some measure it suggests the spirit of prophecy, by disclosing causes which must continue in operation long after our own days; just as the mathematician, only with greater certainty, discovers and applies original laws, by which he can predict the course of the heavens for ages to come. This investigation of the past in objects essentially Christian, began very early in the Church. Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, disciple of John, and companion of Polycarp, published, in five books, the results of his inquiries among the immediate followers of the Apostles as to "what had been delivered from the Lord, and what Andrew or what Peter had said: or what Philip, or what Thomas or James, or what John or Matthew, or any other of the Lord's disciples, and what things Aristion and the Presbyter John, the disciples of the Lord, said¹." He was succeeded in a similar work by Hegesippus, of whom it is now proposed to give some account.

He was a Jew by parentage. But whether he was born in the faith of Christ, or exchanged the law

¹ Euseb. H. E. iii. 39.

for it, is not related¹. Neither are we acquainted with his country, excepting so far that from his knowledge of the Syriac and Hebrew, we may infer that he was a native of Syria, if not of Palestine; most probably of the latter. In either case he would be near the source of the earliest traditions of the Church, and in the neighbourhood of the scenes of the earliest exhibition of the Gospel. The state of that country would naturally lead his mind to explore antiquity. It was a heap of ruins, which provoked an awful curiosity at every step. Another town, under another name, had supplanted Jerusalem. On the ground plot of the Temple stood a temple consecrated to Capitoline Jupiter. The Christian Church, in the new town, now contained the only temple to the living God. Such extraordinary changes were likely to lead the mind of Hegesippus to think of the foundations of the stability of this spiritual temple in the heart of man; and there were signs exhibited within its visible pale, which called significantly and loudly upon him to examine. The Gnostic heresy was busy in proclaiming its pretended light, and asserting the tradition of its tenets from the Lord and his Apostles. It was, as we have seen, particularly rife in the neighbourhood of Hegesippus. The only way directly to refute their pretensions was to obtain the original tradition of the Church. If at that short distance

¹ It has been generally deduced from Eusebius's words in H. E. iv. 22, that he *became* a believer. But his words, expressing merely a deduction from premises which he there mentions, can be taken only to their extent, and that certainly implies no more than that he was a Hebrew believer.

of time from its delivery, he should find one uniform belief, agreeable to the Old and New Testament, prevailing in all the Churches, this was clearly that tradition which had come from the true source, and it showed at once the genuineness both of the doctrines and of the Scriptures of the orthodox. This appears to have been his view in undertaking a long journey, which, in the least extent that we can assign to it, reached from Jerusalem to Rome¹. Most probably it extended still farther to the East, and the archives of the celebrated church of Edessa, which had been taught by Thaddæus, were examined by him. Nor would Alexandria, boasting of her founder Mark, be unvisited.

But we are sure from history that he went to the fountain-head at Jerusalem, and there, upon the very spot, collected the traditions still extant of the acts of the followers of the Lord, of which there yet survive his account of the martyrdom of James, brother of the Lord², of that of Symeon³, and of the confession of the grandsons of Jude before Domitian⁴. He inquired, also, into the various sects of the Jews⁵, no less than of the Christians⁶. It is entirely to him that we owe the brief gleam of light which illumines the general obscurity of a church whose fame is far greater than the knowledge which we have of it. From this common centre he might follow the track of the several Apostles, and messengers of the tidings of the Gospel of peace, to the

¹ Euseb. H. E. iv. 22, which, with a passage commencing c. 8, contains all we know of the history of Hegesippus.

² Ibid. ii. 23.

³ Ibid. iii. 32.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid. iv. 22.

⁶ Ibid.

various spots where they sat down to teach, and rose up again but to carry their message unweariedly on to another station, or to set the seal of martyrdom to the faith which they had delivered to the saints. Never did man proceed on a journey with a more delightful prospect combined with a more noble object. He went in search of the truth, and beheld the spots where it had been established by the apostles of the Son of God, and beheld and conversed with its legitimate receivers and transmitters. The Christian antiquary of the present day, in looking back upon the past, will know how to appreciate the blessedness of this his predecessor. He has carefully to turn over book after book, to put together fragments, to clear up obscurities, happy when he catches a steady gaze, instead of a hasty glimpse, at the desire of his heart. Interesting as the search is, yet he severely feels the want of visible objects, audible words, which, if he supply from imagination, he is no nearer to the truth, but often, perhaps, farther from it than before. Even at his highest satisfaction he sees the glorious cities and the holy men with but that glimpse of truth and imperfect substance which broken monuments supply: all the rest he is conscious are only his own creation, and, pleasant as the subjects of our own creation are, yet, where truth is so intimately concerned, he cannot but contemplate them with an eye of dissatisfaction and distrust when the heat of creative fancy has past away. But Hegesippus went from church to church, from bishop to bishop, seeing with his own eyes, and hearing with his own ears, their testimony to the everlasting truth. What we gather painfully

and imperfectly from lifeless letters, and are afraid to commit to the tablet of our imagination, he enjoyed in the full life of personal conversation with holy men. Their persons, their gesture, their tone of voice made a suitable impression, and fixed their communications on his mind. Instead of the massive volume, and the numbered page, he carried in his memory these lively and dear associations, and his heart was moved at every time that his head was put to its task. Toil was in every respect a pleasure. He could, also, satisfy upon the spot every doubt by question and answer, and a mere nod would clear up to him what we are compelled to leave in irremediable uncertainty. Amidst such reflections we are tempted to apply our Lord's words, and cry,—“Blessed were the eyes which saw the things that thou sawest ¹.”

The object of such a tour would necessarily carry him upon the track of St. Paul, and at Antioch he would find still pure and fresh the tradition which Ignatius had taken such pains to maintain inviolate. Amid the Asian Churches he would come into the full tide of the tradition flowing from the two Apostles, Paul and John, and at Smyrna might converse with Polycarp, if, indeed, he did not meet him afterwards at Rome. The Churches of Macedonia, with Philippi at their head, would receive him next, and present themselves standing fast, and holding the traditions which they had been taught, whether by word or by epistle ². Recommended immediately

¹ Luke x. 23.

² 2 Thess. ii. 15.

from these, he would arrive at Corinth, which is the only place especially mentioned among so many visited by him in his whole journey from Jerusalem to Rome.

The character of this Church for the sincerity of Apostolic tradition must have been very much impaired in the public opinion of Christendom by the schisms which had so miserably divided it. So much discredit to their own spiritual mother, and so much mischief to the cause of truth, is it in the power of a few selfish and wilful men to do. Before offering the testimony of such a church it was necessary for Hegesippus to show that her tradition had remained entire in despite of the grievous rents in her discipline. He, therefore, detailed the account of her divisions, and had the satisfaction of assuring the Catholic Church that, since the reception of Clement's letter, she had remained steadfastly orthodox. The examination of this point would require some time, and the hospitality of the Bishop Primus and his Church detained him there many days, during which he found great comfort in their sound doctrine. Thus far he had investigated the provinces, and found every thing most satisfactory to his views. Great as had been the number of bishops with whom he had conversed, various in the apostles from whom they derived their succession, various in the degree of that succession, various in language and customs, yet he detected no variation of creed. He heard one and the same doctrine from all.

(A.D. 162.) And now the capital of the world contained the only Church remaining which required

the visit of this holy traveller. For a Jewish Christian it offered singular provocations both to his joy and sorrow. As he past through the streets he might behold, towering aloft amid other proud monuments, the triumphal arch of Titus which proclaimed the hateful tale of the utter overthrow of his country, and might avert his face in sorrow and shame. But he might turn away from the representation of the furniture of the Temple, which was carved upon that building, to the living furniture of a living Temple, which was there in all the beauty of holiness. There he found priests clad in righteousness, and was embraced in the arms of brethren. Anicetus was then bishop¹, and he, who found himself so blessed in the visit of Polycarp, and Justin Martyr, would not be slow in showing Hegesippus all the hospitality for which the bishops of Rome had gained so high a character. Here, under favourable circumstances, he pursued his object; and after due investigation composed a work on the succession of the bishops of Rome down to the pontificate of Anicetus². Thus he fulfilled his object, and was able to assure the Christian world, in the face of the heretics, that, throughout his whole journey, he had found in every Church, and in every succession of bishops, all things in accordance with the preaching of the Law, and of the Prophets, and of the Lord. His in-

¹ Euseb. H. E. iv. 11.

² Ibid. 22. Where, however, some (without authority of MSS.) would read *διαρριβήν* instead of *διαδοχήν*. The date at the head of this section is that of the middle of the pontificate of Anicetus.

formation he afterwards digested in a work which he termed *Memorials*¹, consisting of five books, and written in a very plain style², as became a writer upon such a subject, where mere matter of fact constitutes the value of the work. It was a book of evidence, and required, therefore, the most simple and unadorned expression—all that could inform the understanding with nothing that might allure the imagination. It must have been of eminent service at that time, demonstrating an argument which has been rightly and strongly insisted upon (although in the way of challenge rather than of proof) by Irenæus and Tertullian in their disputes with the heretics. Hence it would form an admirable accompaniment to the work of Irenæus which soon followed. But the incuriosity arising from the extinction of the controversy, by which we have lost so much of the original text of Irenæus, has caused the loss of all this work, excepting a few fragments. It must be confessed that one of these presents too legendary a cast. It details the martyrdom of James, and shows Hegesippus to have been, like Papias, his predecessor in such inquiries, a credulous and uncritical investigator of facts. Yet this very defect of the earliest specimen of Ecclesiastical history bears a strong testimony to the inspiration of Scripture. Matthew, Mark, and John were fellow-countrymen of Hegesippus. Why then did not one of them exhibit, as well as he, some specimen of their national credulity, which reduces all the uninspired writings of the Jews

¹ Euseb. H. E. ii. 22.

² Ibid. iv. 8.

(certainly after the Christian æra) to a heap of fables, which bear falsehood in their face¹? Why should their narratives bear all the marks of truth? The supernatural grace of God could alone have freed them from this besetting sin of their origin, and the discernment of the strict truth alone could have suggested so chastened an expression of facts.

Hegesippus remained at Rome during the greater part of the severe reign of Aurelius, and must have witnessed the end of many martyrs to the truth. He left it during the pontificate of Eleutherus², and from that moment all further trace of him is lost.

But we cannot quit him without once more casting our view upon his journey from Church to Church. In the pursuit of truth, this holy man underwent a long fatigue of body and mind. But it was lightened and turned into refreshment by that inward satisfaction which is ever ready at hand to reward such an undertaking. He found the truth triumphant everywhere; everywhere the law, everywhere the prophets, everywhere the Lord. His forefather Abraham was not so blest in his long pilgrimage; for, though fortified occasionally with fresh renewals of the promise, he wandered among strangers both to himself and to God. The truth was in himself alone, whithersoever he came. But this his child, who had obtained the fulfilment of those promises, found comfort at each halting-place in its communion. He met a Melchisedec in every

¹ The exception of the freethinking Josephus only proves the rule.

² Euseb. H. E. iv. 11.

city, who refreshed not his body only, but his soul too, with bread and wine ; and he and they were one in the Lord, through one loaf and one cup, through one faith and one spirit. When he came to a strange city he was no stranger in the moment that he presented himself to its Church. A holy family was ready to take him in. The Bishop and his Presbyters received him among them, and opened to him all the history of their Church, and his visit ever ended with the delight of finding the same undefiled faith, and of course the same indefatigable charity. The kiss of peace and prayers of the brethren dismissed him full of heavenly joy on his road to another church, there again to be received in the open arms of the love which is the fruit of the true faith. Thus he went from blessing to blessing, and from the blessed to the blessed. How different (he might have thankfully reflected) was the reception which the Apostle of the Gentiles had experienced on tracing the very path before him. He had to acquire friends and helpers in every city. Everywhere as he arrived he found the law professed, the prophets believed in, though not understood, but nowhere the Lord. Hegesippus was now reaping in joy what that sower of the Word had sown in sorrow and trembling, in weakness and destitution. Such thoughts would add to his blessedness.

It is an interesting speculation to think what would be the thoughts, the feelings of a man who should at this day traverse the visible Church of God for a like purpose. But it will not amuse us long ; so immediately do we come upon the result. Where are by far the greater part of the Churches

which he visited and found in their palmy state of purity? Or, in defect of these, let us pass on to the West, even beyond the Atlantic. Where is the one and same faith in accordance with the law, the prophets, and the Lord? Instead of finding Church after Church, he would find sect after sect; and he could not sum up his result more appropriately than in terms similar to these of Hegesippus: "Simon, whence the Simonians; and Cleobius, whence the Cleobienes; and Dositheus, whence the Dositheans; and Gorthæus, whence the Gorthæans; and Mesbothæus, whence the Mesbothæans: hence the Menandrianites, and Marcionites, and Carpocratians, and Valentinians, and Basilidians, and Saturnilians. Each have introduced individually and variously his individual opinion." And yet such a state, as indicating the independence of private judgment, is forthwith the paradisiacal state of the Church. If the Churches which Hegesippus visited are nearly vanished, how long will sects endure? Alas! the folly of human nature!

IRENÆUS.

Privileges of the age of Irenæus—His education under Polycarp—His studies—Qualifications of the Missionary—Mission to Gaul joined by Irenæus—Church of Lyons—Irenæus ordained Priest there—Nature of his labours—Persecution at Lyons—He is dispatched to Rome—The advantages reaped from this visit—Is elected Bishop of Lyons—Gnostic heresy invades his Church—Writes his grand work—Doctrines delivered in it—Its literary character—Reflections upon it—Controversy with Florinus and Blastus—Letter to Victor on the Paschal controversy—Other writings—Uncertain death.

HEGESIPPUS closes the list of those who are included in the period of the first succession after the Apostles¹. We have now to descend one step lower from the upper chamber of that glorious company: we have to quit entirely the sight of them, and to hear them no longer in their own words. Much of our interest arising from this communion is of course vanished, but still there remains enough to carry us forward with a strong desire of knowing further.

¹ Euseb. H. E. ii. 23. Compare v. 20.

The first succession had, indeed, all but seen Christ ; and, similarly, the second had all but seen his Apostles. The Revelation of St. John preceded but by a few years the course of events which belongs to the generation of Irenæus¹. We may still, therefore, bless the eyes that saw, and the ears that heard the sights and sounds of the Church of those days. The tradition of the Apostles was still entire, and Irenæus could confute the audacious innovations of heresy by producing what he himself had heard from their hearers², faithful men, who, after having delivered the truth in all sincerity, laid down their lives for its sake, watering with their blood the field which they had sown. The comfortable assurance of miracles still remained to work the conviction of unbelievers, and to support the faith of believers ; and from these Irenæus again could deny the pretensions of the heretics to any share in Christ and his Apostles³. The sun, indeed, had set ; but his beams were still reflected from the sky ; and though not with warmth, yet with exceeding beauty. The hull of the vessel had indeed disappeared ; but the pennon with the cross upon it was still peering above the horizon. The reference to the fountain-head, though not immediate, was through a stream whose course was equally short and pure. No one who chose to seek might not find. The most unlearned knew that in

¹ Euseb. H. E. v. 8.

² Iren. iv. 26. 2 ; 27. 3 ; 32. 1 ; v. 5. 1 ; 20. 1, 2, &c.

³ Ibid. ii. 31. 2 ; 32. 4. (ii. 56, 57. ed. Grabe.) The original Greek is preserved in Euseb. H. E. v. 7.

their bishop they had a certain successor to the Apostles, and at an interval which amply admitted of the utmost purity in the transmission of their doctrine.

Irenæus is the star of this happy generation ; and we are enabled to follow his course with much greater certainty and minuteness than has attended the observation of his predecessors. For scanty though the materials still are, compared with the importance of his character, and the number of noble monuments which could once have supplied them, yet they are much more copious than any that have hitherto been employed in this work. We commence, indeed, with uncertainty, for neither the exact place nor exact time of his birth have been recorded. Still we may well be content with placing the latter in the second quarter of the second century ; and we may, without much hesitation, assume Smyrna for the former. He appears to have been brought up in the knowledge of Christ from his very cradle, for not a scar does he show of pagan bondage through any one expression in all his extant writings. His name, denoting peaceful, was well conferred on one who had never been tossed about, like Justin Martyr, on the restless sea of philosophy, but had ever reposed upon the Gospel of peace. Thus happy in his very cradle, he was more happy still in having such a teacher as Polycarp. Under him he grew up in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ ; and, like all pupils that have put to good account the instruction which they have received, mentioned his master ever after in terms of deep gratitude and affection. Of this he

has left on record a beautiful instance in his letter to Florinus¹, an acquaintance of his early days, who had fallen away from the truth, and gone beyond even the errors of the Gnostics. The melancholy note in which he deploras the apostacy of the companion of his boyish days, and speaks of the lively recollection which he had of them, will go to the heart of every reader. "These doctrines, Florinus, are not (to speak gently) those of a sound judgment. These doctrines are not in unison with the Church, involving, as they do, those who are led by them, in the greatest impiety. These doctrines not even the heretics, who are without the pale of the Church, have ever ventured to declare. These doctrines they, who were our seniors, and had conversed with the Apostles, did not deliver to you. For I saw you, when I was yet a boy, in Lower Asia, with the famous Polycarp, enjoying a brilliant rank in the imperial court, and endeavouring to win his good opinion. For I remember facts of those days better than what have happened lately; inasmuch as what we learn from a child grows up with the mind, and becomes one with it; so that I can tell the very place in which the blessed Polycarp used to sit and discourse, and his going forth and his coming in, and the fashion of his life, and the appearance of his person, and the discourses which he used to make to the congregation; and how he used to inform us of his conversation with John, and of that with the rest of those who had seen the Lord; and how he used to relate from memory their sayings, and what those things were which he had heard from them concern-

¹ The fragment is preserved in Euseb. H. E. v. 20.

ing the Lord ; and concerning his miracles and his teaching, how Polycarp, having received his information from the eye-witnesses of the Word of life, used to report all in consonance with the Scriptures. These things, at that time too, I heard with all diligence, on account of the grace of God which was upon me, taking note of them not on paper, but on the tablet of my heart ; and moreover, because of the grace of God, I now am continually turning them over in my mind again and again in all their genuineness. And I can testify before God, that had that blessed and apostolic elder heard any thing like it, he would have cried out, and stopped his ears, and said, according to his usual phrase, ‘O glorious God ! for what times hast thou reserved me that I should endure this language ?’ and would have fled from the place where he had been sitting or standing when he heard such language.” These are the expressions of a man whose heart burned indeed within him with the Word of God, and as he mused the fire of holy recollections kindled, and he spoke. He unveils to us at once his own character and that of his Master, and the zealous old man, and the diligent boy pass in lively representation before us. So blessed is the memory of the faithful guides of our early years, that it remains, incorrupt and fresh within us, to the last. They have implanted in us a portion of their own pure and immortal mind as they taught us.

The man who could speak thus of his early years was not likely to neglect to put to the utmost account either the divine grace or the human talent, which he had received in company with such rare opportunities of employing both to the greatest

effect. If a tree be known by its fruits, we are certified of the unwearied diligence of Irenæus. He quenched not the Spirit by listlessness or unprofitable waste, but obtained the blessing of God upon his labours by faithful perseverance. He was but a youth when he was deprived of his aged guide¹, who in his last moments gave him a final lesson, which, amid the various perils and sufferings of his after life, would administer to his comfort and courage, and present his precepts concentrated in one bright example. He was as yet of too little note to suffer in the persecution which thus bereaved him, and he would soon look out for other teachers, from whom he might further derive what they had seen and heard in company with the Apostles. A few such were still left, to one of whom he seems especially to have attached himself as a source of such information². But he did not confine himself to sacred learning. The necessities of the Church, which he diligently kept in view, demanded that he should extend his range. She had risen up from her first lowly condition to the level of the educated ranks, and the consequence was an influx into her pure wells of all the turbid streams of human learning. It was necessary to detect the mixture, which the multitude, ever led away by first appearances and sudden impulse, was unable and often unwilling to do. One well acquainted with pure water will readily

¹ Adv. Hær. iii. 3. 16. The original Greek is preserved in Euseb. H. E. iv. 14.

² See them quoted by him in the extracts given by Dr. Routh, in vol. i. of his *Reliquiæ Sacræ*. One especially he designates under the title of 'My Better.' See Euseb. H. E. v. 8.

discern the least cloudiness of its transparency. But many had seen no other than that which had been discoloured by the poisonous infusions of the heretics, and many had paid so little attention even to the pure, that their incurious eyes did not distinguish the impure from it. The task of the teacher was now, therefore, doubled; he had not only to teach the truth, but also to clear it from error. For the latter purpose, he had to trace the turbid streams to their source, and cut them off from flowing into the spiritual Bethesda, and wherever the waters were already defiled by mixture, he had to prove that they were so, and to warn the ignorant and careless against their use. Thus the philosophical studies of some of the Fathers, which have been a favourite topic of declamation with some people, were necessary; and they would not have deserved the title of Fathers without them. They had not only to instruct those who were within, but also to confute those who were without. Every age of the Church has its controversy with error, and that error to be refuted must be known. How soon would infidelity have swallowed up all religion, if it had gone unrefuted! And unrefuted it would have been, if the sons of the Church had not acquainted themselves with that human learning on which it relied. To such studies Irenæus betook himself, and the event proved that he had done it under the blessing of God.

Thus was he preparing himself for God's call to service by the sedulous cultivation of his peculiar talents, when it came in a shape which may not appear to the eyes of many at this day to be at all

suitable. It was to accompany a mission to a distant and imperfectly civilized land. The superior success of the Church in those times shows that she understood much better than we do now the requisites for such a service. She was not so foolishly regardless of the accomplishments of the missionary, as to suppose that mere zeal, seconded by a respectable fund of Scriptural knowledge, was sufficient. For the missionary, even among rude tribes, should be a man of no common information. He should know not only the Gospel, but the human heart and understanding too. For this, he must not only have studied his own mind, but have obtained further information from the writings of others. Particularly, he should be readily conversant with all the great questions of natural religion, and with the various shapes which it assumes in the minds of men, in all the stages from superstition to infidelity. With these, both common sense and Scriptural example¹ tell us that he must begin. It is the only way whereby to cleanse out the old corruption from the vessel, this alone can mix like the soap with the filth, and make the way for its removal by the pure water of the Gospel. Otherwise, he pursues a still more fruitless task than he who would wash, with mere water, a garment soiled with the dust and dirt of years. There must be this medium. The cross of Christ cannot come into immediate contact with the staff of the augur, or wand of the diviner: the atonement cannot be appreciated by men ignorant of the attributes of the one God, as felt and seen in

¹ Acts xvii.

themselves and in all around ; it will but add an element to the deadly superstition in which they are involved. To such questions, whether he will or not, the missionary will quickly be brought by the many hesitations and objections which he will encounter amongst such hearers. And if he be found wanting here, how shall he be listened to any longer? Shall he, they may say, who cannot explain the elements, pretend to teach a system? Shall he who is ignorant of outward things, conduct to inward? When they have at last, by question and answer, discovered the utter inefficacy of all human knowledge and means to obtain that which the contemplation of a just and good God creates in the heart of sinful and sorrowing man, then comes the acceptable time of the Gospel. It was on such principles that the primitive Church, when she sent a missionary to India, selected the philosopher Pantænus, and among the preachers whom she was now sending to Gaul, included Irenæus.

The connexion between Gaul and Asia had commenced early. Seven hundred years before this time, the Phocæans, fleeing from before the conquering Cyrus, founded their celebrated colony of Marseilles, which even now retained the language and literature of the mother-country in such purity, as to supply a place of education to such of the Roman youth as could not afford a more expensive residence at Athens or in Asia¹. But Asia had then sent into Gaul philosophy and its vain deceits. She was now preparing to introduce the Gospel of life.

¹ Tacit. Agric. 4.

It was a truly Christian-like return for the devastating colony of warriors which Gaul had sent and settled in her very heart four hundred and fifty years ago. But these warriors, since their conquest by the Romans, had become peaceable peasants and citizens, and by no people was the Apostle of the Gentiles received more heartily than by the Galatians. They were, perhaps, the original movers of the present mission,—at all events, they would give their hearty concurrence when it had once been suggested, whether by the traders from Gaul to Asia, or by the Gaulish merchants settled in Asia. The Phrygians, part of whose country they occupied, sent also some of their countrymen¹, who were, generally speaking, better qualified by their zeal than by their discretion. In addition to these causes, it is possible also that some who had accompanied Polycarp to Rome, had crossed the Alps with the news of redemption, and excited a desire for more preachers, which was communicated through numerous traders to the Churches in Asia. This mission is especially interesting, as presenting the first instance of a body of preachers being sent forth. The Church of

¹ One or two are mentioned in the letter of the Churches of Vienne and Lyons. But perhaps Galatians would also be called Phrygians by the Galatians of the west, as the English across the Atlantic are called by us Americans. It should be observed, that there is no distinct mention of this mission from Asia till we come to late writers; but the conclusion from the names in this letter and its address ("To the brethren in Asia and Phrygia") is so obvious, that it has been generally adopted. The time too is uncertain, as to whether before or after Polycarp's death. So too is the time of Irenæus's going to Gaul. I have assumed what seemed most probable.

Antioch had sent but Paul and Barnabas, superior indeed in gifts to whole bodies, but the Churches of Asia sent out an organized Church, with Pothinus, a man of years and grave character, at its head as bishop. Irenæus might have been his deacon. When we remember also that probably Britain originally received the Gospel from Gaul, we cannot but regard with a feeling of love and thankfulness the voyage of this holy company of preachers, who in a manner preached to our own country. They remind us of Augustine and his priestly train ; but how much more pure was their faith, how much more large their charity ! No stain of sacerdotal ambition, no rite or emblem of superstition, was here. They went forth in the pure undefiled spirit of the Gospel. How would the hearts of these saintly men have leaped, could they have foreseen the ultimate result of their mission ! Could they have known that from that country whither they were conveying the word of life, it would pass into an island whose inhabitants, in latter days, should send it far and wide over the whole earth, far beyond the east which they knew, and to the west, and to the south, beyond an ocean which they deemed the boundaries of the earth, to tracts of country which in the sum exceeded seven fold the extent of the habitable world as they estimated it. If their eyes were happy in beholding the Gospel in its primitive purity, and miraculous power, ours are not unblest, which behold it in such vast extent of dominion.

(A. D. 170.) In such company, and on such an occasion, Irenæus left his native shore. Perhaps

the thought might occur to him, among the many in which he would endeavour to lose sight of sorrowful reflections, how formerly a whole city had embarked from these shores for Gaul under a solemn oath never to return ; and with this he might compare the departure of the spiritual city, of which he was a member, to the same country. But he and his fellow-citizens needed no oath to bind them. The infirmity of their flesh was supported by no human artifice, but by the help of the Lord. Where could they be strangers, who, if asked, " Who are you ? " could, in the answer of the single word " Christian," give the name of themselves, of their profession, of their rank, of their family, of their country¹. Accordingly not one, whose name has been recorded, returned to lay his bones with his fathers. We hear of no Demas among them ; but, on the contrary, they gave up the ghost amid the tortures of persecution in the land whither they were now going. The Mediterranean was crossed, the mouth of the Rhone was gained, and Irenæus, as he sailed up its stream, would gaze with a curious eye upon his adopted country. The river then flowed through a spiritual solitude, and the only Church of Christ was floating upon its waters. He past in succession the barbarous spots where at this day the spires and towers of Arles, Nismes, Avignon, Valence, and Vienne, proclaim the success of his mission. He now entered the country whence the crusaders repaid this Asiatic visit, as their Gallic predecessors had done, with fire and sword in

¹ See the beautiful remark on the confession of Sanctus in the forementioned letter.

their hands. How different was the Gospel which they carried back from that which they had received ! How different the missionaries ! The mouth of the Arar, or Soane, was the limit of their voyage : here they fixed the centre of their mission.

At this point, so opportune for commerce, a town had been built, which under Roman auspices grew into the capital of the province. It was named Lugdunum, and was the parent of the modern Lyons. The Romans founded here a colony, which shortly became so flourishing as to attract the notice of Caligula, who instituted prizes for Greek and Roman eloquence¹. Its situation was no less opportune for the Gospel ; and the same rivers which conveyed into the centre of Gaul, and into the heart of the Alps, the merchandize of Asia and the Mediterranean, would convey to the same quarters that which was above all price, and yet could be bought by those who had no money. The effects of the Gospel of peace were shortly exhibited in a striking example. A virulent hatred, which had proceeded even to mutual slaughter, had prevailed between the towns of Lyons and Vienne². But the churches which were now founded in them were united in the strictest bonds of love, which were not consumed by the fiery trials which shortly came upon them. Here Irenæus ministered to Pothinus before the Lord, and received from his hands the order of presbyter³. We can follow his labours only in imagination, the

¹ Sueton. Calig. 20.

² Tacit. Hist. i. 65. quoted Dr. Routh in Reliq. Sacr. p. 301.

³ Hieronym. in Catalog.

indulgence of which in such a case will be pleasing if not profitable. We may place the youthful missionary on the neighbouring heights, and enter into his thoughts and feelings, as he gazed on the remote Alps, whose ruggedness seemed to challenge the softening hand of the Gospel to their rude inhabitants, and distance and extent palpably exhibited to him the wide field on which he had undertaken to labour. As their snows glowed with the rising sun, he would feel the suggestion of conveying the day-spring of the Gospel into their wild recesses. With the rest of the missionary clergy he would in time penetrate into their valleys, and threading the course of the two rivers with their tributaries he might preach the Gospel on the native soil of Calvin and Beza. Here he would substitute the psalms of David for the songs of the Bards, and the sunless grove and Druidical circle would lose a portion of their votaries. As he came into their towns and villages he would immediately be surrounded by crowds of this inquisitive people, and required to explain whence he came, and what was the news along the line of his journey¹. How eagerly would he catch at such an opening, and, informing them in proportion as they could bear it, tell them how he was the messenger of the Son of God, from what a glorious spiritual city he came, what joyous news he brought of redemption to lost man.

This personal communication with the rude inhabitants could only be obtained through a knowledge of their language; and the entire devotion of Irenæus

¹ Cæsar. de Bell. Gall. iv. 5.

to the common work of a missionary is shown by his undergoing the painful task of acquiring it, for such it truly was to a Greek, as much as it would have been for Phidias, after he had carved Olympian Jove, to set himself to the work of hewing wood into the deformed logs which represented their gods¹. His native Greek was well understood in the colony, and many of the inhabitants there combined a good knowledge of it with that of their native Celtic. These might have been employed as interpreters, or even as missionaries, and Irenæus might have staid at Lyons, as some perhaps did, employing himself in the superintendence of the instruction of such missionaries. But he could not endure this second-hand communication with the people whom he had been called to come and save. Sensible, therefore, as he must have been, to the beauty and riches of his own incomparable language, he did not exercise that supercilious and incurious contempt with which the Greek neglected every other dialect of mankind. The gospel had long ago quelled such a temper in his breast, and the gift of tongues from God had proclaimed that all were excellent, in as far as they conveyed the knowledge of his gospel, and confessed that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. The free and intimate communion which he would thus obtain with the natives, would be an ample reward for any disgust in preparing such means; and the fears which he might entertain of his rude employment destroying all the polish required in a writer was not realized².

¹ Lucan. iii. 412.

² See the Preface to his work.

(A.D. 177.) But such a good work was not suffered to go on very long without a severe check from the worker of evil. The annual festival had come round at Lyons, with the usual shows of the amphitheatre¹. This season, always dangerous to the Christians, was now fatal. A riot was raised against them by the populace, who, after they had already expelled them from all the places of public resort, proceeded to dreadful outrages upon their persons, beating them, dragging them, and stoning them. The municipal officers abetted this violence, and carrying them into the forum, there questioned them publicly on their profession. They confessed themselves Christians; and thereupon were sent to prison to await the arrival of the governor. This, which ought to have brought relief to the innocent, only aggravated their sufferings. Most cruel tortures were applied, to extort confessions of the truth of the horrible calumnies with which the Christians were charged. Under trials so severe, some denials took place, but only to make the example of the faithful still more bright. At last, some were led out to a second trial in the amphitheatre, when the governor, learning that one of them was a Roman, sent to Rome to know the Emperor's will, and awaited his answer before further proceedings. But Marcus Aurelius, who had just bedewed with tears the affected letter of the sophist Aristides on the earthquake of Smyrna, was incapable of being moved by the sufferings of the Christians. He sent orders for such as confessed themselves Christians to be put

¹ Epist. Vienn. and Lugdun. Eccles. c. 12.

to death, and such as denied to be set at liberty. On this the cruelties recommenced, and the violence on their persons was only terminated by burning their corpses, the ashes of which were swept by the winds into the waters of the Rhone.

In the midst of this suffering was exhibited a signal instance of that utter expulsion of selfishness, and largeness of charity, which the Gospel alone can effect. These martyrs, with the Bishop Pothinus at their head, fresh from the rack, and cooped up in a horrible dungeon, could forget the misery of their own situation so utterly, as to take into consideration a case referred to them by their brethren in Asia. The claims to prophetic inspiration set up by Montanus and his followers, who had commenced and were spreading their sect in Phrygia, were the subject of their deliberation, and they wrote letters upon it to their brethren in Phrygia and Asia; nor to them only, but also to Eleutherus, as the Bishop of Rome. With these letters Irenæus was charged, and splendid was the testimony which they bore to him. "These letters (they say) we have charged our brother and partner Irenæus to convey, and we exhort you to take him under your care and protection, as one who is zealous in the cause of the covenant of Christ. For could we think that uprightness acquired rank for a man, we should recommend him as a presbyter of the Church (which he is) among the first¹." Such was the praise of Irenæus from men, who, expecting every moment to finish by death their cruel trial for Christ's sake, could not lie; whose body, with its

¹ Euseb. H. E. v. 4.

passions, was already crucified ; and their spirit was let free to range over the Church of distant places and times, as present to each, and could therefore entertain no respect of persons. Bearing with him also a letter from the Church on the same question to the same person, he left Lyons in the early part of the persecution ¹.

A second time did Irenæus thus behold the horrors of a persecution. The example of Polycarp and his companions had been renewed under circumstances even yet more terrible, and through a courage and patience alike unconquerable, in men, and in women, and in children. It must have been with a sorrowful heart that he took leave of the prisoners for the cause of Christ, whom it was scarcely probable that he could behold again in the flesh. The aged Bishop, in particular, was now at the age of ninety, and, even if released without farther suffering, could scarcely be expected long to survive the ill treatment which he had endured. In him Irenæus would lose the company of one, who in the days of his boyhood might have seen the Apostle John, to whom, therefore, he would especially attach himself. How vividly must the old man, thus qualified, have brought back to him his recollections of Polycarp, and revived the feelings which he has described so beautifully in his account of that martyr. It must have been therefore a painful leave which he now took of his superior, and of companions and equals, who had

¹ This journey to Rome naturally implied in the words of Euseb. H. E. v. 4. is distinctly mentioned by Jerome in his catalogue.

come with him from a distant home in civilized Asia to this remote and barbarous land in the extreme West. Often during his journey must their faces have been present to his imagination, and the thought that at that moment they might be undergoing their last agony, would immediately occur. They might be even the faces of the dead.

But the tumult of the capital of the world would shortly disperse the melancholy thoughts which would have crowded upon him in passing the solitudes of the Alps, and he would renew his intercourse with his native East through its many representatives in this great congregation of mankind. The wonted hospitality of this Church would be freely extended to one who came to it with such high recommendations; and the reverence and affection with which he seems ever after to have regarded it, show how favourable had been his reception. He would not neglect the opportunities which the place afforded him. Rome at that day, flocked to by the faithful from all parts, was necessarily a rich deposit of apostolical tradition. Hither his master Polycarp himself had conveyed what he had received from St. John, and hither Hegesippus had lately brought the accumulated treasures of his travels among the Churches. But the tares also had come with the wheat, and every heretic found his way to Rome, as soon as he had gained any notoriety. The heresy of Valentinus, who had come hither nearly forty years ago, was deluding many with its fantastic inventions; and on this, and perhaps subsequent visits, Irenæus watched it narrowly. It is necessary to obtain acquaintance with a system before a writer takes upon

himself to refute it; and a system of Gnosticism, beyond all others, required the closest attention, in order to unravel and detect it¹. That of Valentinus was pre-eminent in completeness of system, in extravagance of imagination, and in wildness of assumption. They who know what it is to gather the notions of a writer whose only rule seems to be the avoiding of truth,—who have experienced the weariness of following his tangled maze of doctrine, without a hope of reaching a conclusive result, of trying to extract sense from shuffling or mysterious obscurity, of endeavouring to fix and embody the evanescent shadows of his meaning, and to put in a direct form the subtle and purposed equivocation, who have deplored the vexation which attends this waste of time, during which they might have produced or acquired substantial knowledge instead of pursuing shadows,—who have found themselves thus excited with passion, instead of being turned to reflection, being harassed with disgust at mortifying views of human nature, made but too conscious of uncharitable anger and contempt which is thereby wrought in their bosoms, having admitted an unclean spirit within them, and received the knowledge of evil without the benefit of good,—such persons will adequately enter into the difficulties of the task which Irenæus now proposed to himself, when he set himself down to the study of the books of the Valentinian and other heretics, and listened to their teachers, in order to obtain the knowledge of their real opinions²,

¹ See preface and conclusion of Irenæus to his first book, and preface to his fourth.

² See his preface to his first book.

and unmask them to more simple believers. If we but too often feel an irksome consciousness of unprofitable employment, in following out the various systems of human philosophy, where common sense has not been forsaken, but certainty and practical result is wanting, how very unsatisfactory must have been the occupation of Irenæus, in expatiating over this field of wilful folly and delusion !

But the place afforded him a delightful recreation from such toil. He could have converse with the saints of every Church in Christendom. Here he could compare notes with those who had received, in a direct line of tradition and succession, the instructions of Peter and Paul, as he himself had received those of St. John, and also with the Alexandrian successors of Mark, with the Cretan of Titus, with the Philippian of Paul, with the Hierosolymitan of James, and might renew his acquaintance with the Ephesian of Timothy and John, and the Antiochian of Peter and Paul. Worthless, and worse than worthless, as would be any converse of ours with such successors of this day, and absurd as would be any deference to their tradition, yet in his days invaluable was the advantage of such communication to Irenæus. Tradition had, in some instances, run as yet but through one intermediate channel, and persecution, nakedness, and the sword, had amply done their work, in checking that innate and carnal love of power, which lies at the root of all corruption of divine truth. Here, therefore, both now and subsequently, he would lay in an ample stock of apostolical information, and add to the stores which were already rich from the treasury of

the Asian hearers of John. Thus this visit must have been a critical time in the life of Irenæus, if it supplied much of the materials, and perhaps partly suggested the origin, of the work upon which his fame depends.

Still he would have time for many mournful reflections upon the scenes which must be passing at Lyons, and been in daily fear of receiving most afflicting news. This now arrived. He received an account that the aged Pothinas, after enduring much cruel treatment, had expired in prison, and his own presence was required by the Church to supply the vacant chair. He returned, therefore, and took his post of superior anxiety and danger. Sad must have been this revisit. He found the flock deprived of its teachers, and saw many and wide gaps in the ranks of his friends. In a foreign country this is peculiarly distressing, because such companions maintain in a manner the abode of our native country among us. We can still indulge in the feelings and in the language to which we have been accustomed from childhood, and we can recal the memory of past scenes by the delightful rivalry of a conversation directed to their recollection. But when these are taken from us, we are, indeed, abroad and in exile. Our only lasting country is the Church of God, and our only lasting friends are its indwellers. Here Irenæus had ever made his home, and therefore amid all the outward destitution he was comforted. The persecution, the fury of which had now past away, left him a charge much lightened in its more difficult parts, although with an accumulation in its more easy. The Church had

been relieved from its unsound members, and Irenæus had not the ever unsatisfactory task of dealing with false brethren, and attempting to guide and feed wolves in sheep's clothing. He had the more pleasing but melancholy duty of comforting the very numerous sorrows, and of providing for the crowd of widows and orphans. Where all hearts were open, his labour was deprived of anxiety. He wrought with all the cheerful hopes of a sower, whose ground has been well cleared from weeds, well dug, and well watered. The traces of the late ravages growing daily fainter, the Church would resume her former order and beauty under his care.

But all is in continual progress from one extreme to another in the societies of man. Built though they may be, like churches, upon the truth, yet human corruption will ever introduce the fluctuation of error. At their very height of beauty and pride they are but as flowers, which from that moment commence their decay. The usual foe, which made every breathing-time won from the struggle of persecution a period of essential inward danger, now invaded his flourishing Church, and with a ravage more irremediable than that of the sword. The sharp sword of man wounded or slew but the body, and by the very act purified the spirit. But the false word of man assailed the spirit itself, and wounded or slew the soul. The Gnostic heresy, which seemed to surround the Church like water, ready to take advantage of every flaw in the vessel, was the enemy against which the anxiety of Irenæus was now directed. That it should be prevalent in countries where literature had been long and widely

established, was natural. In such there are always numbers of men who, ambitious, and yet incapable, of originality, seek it in the ground which the consent and common sense of mankind has left unbeaten. But we do wonder at first sight that it should find its food in the unsophisticated minds of the Gauls. Schools of Greek and Roman eloquence, however, had been established, as we have seen, at Lyons; and the national character, greedy of novelty, so as even to lend itself a willing dupe to any thing which pleased for the moment, was not likely to offer a repulse to new opinions, which were tricked out moreover in all that false glitter and pretence which had, and still has, such charms for the Gauls. As might have been expected, it visited this rude people in its most sensual and gross shape. It was the system of Marcus, which Irenæus has detailed, as dealing in seductions of magic and bodily impurity, which now visited the remote shores of the Rhone¹, and deeply would the gangrene of such a heresy eat among such a people.

(A.D. 190.) Irenæus now began to reap the harvest of his former studies. He knew his enemy, to his inward thoughts, as well as to the utmost resources of his arms, and could expose to the misguided of his flock the real nature of what appeared under so alluring a shape. Happy indeed was Gaul in such a bishop. His gravity and purity of character, his reputation for learning, his well-known converse with Polycarp and other disciples of the

¹ Irenæus i. 13. 7.

Apostles, gave him an authority which few bishops of his day, not excepting him of Rome, could exercise. Nor was he content with rescuing his own flock from the wolf, but projected the deliverance of the whole Church. Under the profession of instructing one particular shepherd (whoever he might be) in the knowledge of these heresies, and in the answers by which they were to be refuted, he set forth his famous work, entitled "A Refutation and Subversion of Knowledge falsely so called¹." It consists of five books, in the first of which he describes the various heresies; in the second, he exposes and refutes them; in the third, he appeals to Scripture against them; the fourth is especially directed against the fundamental Gnostic opinion, which separated the Creator from the supreme God; and the fifth, against the denial of the resurrection of the body. This great work appears to have occupied the writer for some time, since the books were put forth not at once, but at successive periods². As a record not only of the opinions of the heretics, but also of the church at that day, it is invaluable. We find there the maintenance of the cardinal doctrines of our faith, as the perfect godhead of the Son³, justification through a faith productive of works⁴, the atonement⁵, the resurrection of the

¹ Euseb. H. E. v. 7. Iren. præf. lib. ii. iv. v.; the common short title is also given by Eusebius in ib. iii. 23. That it was composed in Gaul, appears from his preface, and that it was in the episcopate of Eleutherus of Rome, from iii. 3.

² See the several prefaces. ³ iv. 8. (Ed. Grabe.)

⁴ iv. 13. 27. (id.) compared with ib. 32. 49.

⁵ Ib. iii. 5. &c.

body¹, the personality², gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit³; and he gives us, moreover, a summary of the faith of the Catholic Church of his time⁴. He declares too the sufficiency of the Scripture for all doctrine⁵, and shows the necessity of an Apostolic succession of bishops, for the vindication both of the genuineness of the books and of the purity of the text⁶. It must indeed be confessed that, like every uninspired work, it contains errors; as, for instance, upon the age of our Saviour at his passion, which he makes to be between forty and fifty, into which assertion he appears to have been driven by heat of argument. He maintains also, with other Fathers of the primitive Church, the commerce of the fallen angels with women⁷, and follows them in his notions of the millennium, according to which Christ should reign on earth with his saints for a thousand years, which were to terminate with the general resurrection⁸. This last extravagance seems to have originated with Papias⁹, who is so unfortunate as never to be mentioned by modern writers, without the appendage of the character which Eusebius has given him, of being a man of mean understanding¹⁰. We must allow also that, like the others, he is not very critical in his judgment, or logical in his reasoning, so that the truth is sometimes supported by very fallacious argument. Perhaps their conflicts

¹ See book v. throughout.

² iv. 37. &c.

³ iii. 19. v. 18. &c.

⁴ i. 2. (i. 10. 1. Ed. Bened.)

⁵ ii. 46.

⁶ iii. 1, 2, 3.

⁷ iv. 70. See Tertull. de Virgin. valand. 7.

⁸ See the five last chapters of Book v.

⁹ v. 33.

¹⁰ H. E. iii. 39.

with the slippery sophistry of the heretics led the Fathers into a still greater indulgence in that to which the age, as referred both to the Jewish doctors and the heathen philosophers, was already too prone; just as the controversy with the infidels still more deeply infected our divines of the last century with the cold ethical spirit of their age.

This work contains an immense store both of heathen and ecclesiastical knowledge, drawn from the poets and philosophers, from the Scriptures, and from conversation with the disciples of the Apostles; and the language (where the original Greek survives) though unpretending, is proper, and even shows a carefulness of selection. But very different has been the estimation in which it has been held by ancients and moderns. All the ancients (and surely they, from their times and language, were the most competent judges) agree in praising it. Some moderns, however, partly from love of paradox, partly from that vulgar and perverse spirit which loves to decry the works and opinions of antiquity, and partly from heretical prejudice, have as much depreciated it¹. If they looked for deep philosophical investigation, and for learned speculations drawn from the various systems current in the world, and connected with this interesting subject, they would be disappointed.

¹ Mosheim de Rebus ante Constantin. gestis. Sæc. II. § 21. note; and Semler. Dissert. in Tertull. I. § 10. These gentlemen might have recollected the difference between an original and a bad translation. It is true, indeed, that their own Latin works would not be losers by such a translation into another tongue. But we have clear proof that this has not been the case with the Greek of Irenæus.

Irenæus was not writing for idle and dreamy scholars, but for practical and active teachers. Had he, indeed, like too many modern writers on sacred subjects, sought his own glory, rather than the good of his Master's service, he might have preferred brilliant theory to sober truth. But instead of such vain flourishes, such uncertain running and beating of the air, he follows his adversary close on his track, overtakes him, and grapples with him. The postures may seem inelegant to those who are practised only in the light and dancing attitudes of modern speculation; their vigour will be mistaken for rudeness, and the clenched grasp is not to the taste of those who catch the painted butterflies of showy conjecture. If it be a merit, however, in a writer fully to accomplish his purpose, Irenæus is entitled to it in the highest degree. He put a weapon into the hands of all his brethren, which they employed with sure effect. The heresies have long been numbered with the extinct offsprings of human folly. But his work still lives. From his quiver the opposite ranks were continually assailed, until they were forced to quit the field, and take up other ground, thence to be driven again by new champions.

It is the unfortunate lot of all works of controversy, that their very success is commonly fatal to their survival, and always detrimental to the permanence of the interest which they once excited. The battle is over, and the cause has ceased to enlist partisans. Hence this work of Irenæus has been turned over with an unwilling hand by many that have felt bound to take it up, and has accordingly met with that depreciation with which men so frequently revenge

themselves upon an author whom they are either too listless or too dull to understand. Its avowed object is now a mere fight with a shadow, and the first impression upon our minds is that of wonder how Irenæus could think it worth his while to refute such extravagance. As we proceed, however, the opinions of past ages unveil themselves to us, we find ourselves amid the minds of those days, and we see the perils which beset the truth. Although, therefore, its day of service be long gone by, we cannot but regard it with interest and admiration. Our generation of the bayonet and the bullet may yet gaze with reverence upon the suspended helm and coat of mail of the Black Prince, and no generous warrior of Waterloo will despise the arms which achieved the victory of Cressy. Like that armour, too, this work has reached our days quite soiled with rust, seen as it is but in the imperfection of a most barbarous Latin translation. Some parts, however, especially the first book, remain to us in the polish of the original language, and give testimony to the excellence of the metal. They show that Irenæus could employ his native Greek with purity and propriety, and our regret is excited, as ever and anon particular expressions of the rugged and obscure Latin suggest the beautiful body of Greek with which these dry and broken bones must once have been clothed. In some passages of controversial importance, this loss of the original is most especially to be deplored¹. In their present state, they resemble those old ruins

¹ For instance iii. 3. so famous in the Popish controversy. The combatants are fighting in the dark.

which have lost their outward casing, so that even their former general character can sometimes be scarcely made out to our satisfaction, much less the particular features. The argument which proves any one aperture to be a door, may be answered by one equally good which shall prove it to be a window.

Thus from the distant banks of the Rhone came a voice which was answered to with joy by the Church throughout Christendom. It marks, indeed, a memorable era for the West. It was the first time that literature received any contribution from this side of the Alps; so that it is, in this sense, the forerunner of all those noble works which have since adorned the Gallican and Anglican Churches; and there is something very interesting in taking off our view from this champion of the truth to rest it upon such as Hooker, who fought against enemies not so extravagant indeed in imagination, but quite as perverse in understanding. Irenæus has well proved, to the encouragement of all his successors, how learning, long sought with a single eye directed upon the truth, and by a heart warmed by God's Holy Spirit, can effect a service in the Church which shall never be forgotten. However splendid instances may be adduced from modern controversy, they must yield to this, inasmuch as it required a more extensive field of information, and the enemy was much more dangerous. Such as have been carried on within the pale of Christian profession, have a much more limited subject and importance; and such as have been carried on against the infidel required less

learning¹, although at least equal acuteness of understanding, while the enemies were few and weakly supported. Here, then, we have a most comfortable proof, that if we take up any particular line of study with a view to useful service in God's Church, beginning, continuing, and ending it in him, (and what pursuit should not be so taken up?) God in his good pleasure will then assuredly fix the day and hour on which it shall come forth in full efficiency. How blessed is that day and hour! The consciousness of having been made an useful instrument of God's service confers the highest enjoyment of which man is capable. The deep and due sense of utter unworthiness of such honour, of intrinsic unprofitableness, adds but to the joy of the thankfulness for such a blessing. He is advanced to a post approaching to that of ministering angels, and he is filled with the joy of him who was made ruler over ten cities. How deep is the calm of such a mind! All is in harmony, as attuned to the one note of God's glory. There is no obliquity of understanding, no extravagance of imagination. Every faculty is in its most healthy exercise, and the human mind enjoys the utmost perfection that is attainable in company with the mortal body. "God is with us," is the comfortable assurance of the faithful servant of Christ in every exercise of his gifts.

Henceforward the name of Irenæus was celebrated throughout the Churches. From his remote and

¹ I should except, however, Bentley's admirable letters, under the title of Phileleutherus Lipsiensis.

obscure diocese, the very existence of which, late as it was, would be unknown to parts of Christendom, he was heard with reverence even by the occupants of the chairs of the Apostles at Rome, and Antioch, and Jerusalem. Nor did he sit down content with the mighty victory which he had achieved. He maintained the fight against the enemies of the truth, under the various shapes which they assumed. Among these came forth Florinus, the companion of his early years, and partner in the instruction of Polycarp. The contest, though against but a single enemy, and against an opinion not so likely to delude as were those of the Gnostics, was yet much more painful to Irenæus. To find one whose mind has made its early shoots together with our own, under the same fostering care, one with which we have held the sweet communion of the generous feelings of youth, and of the opinions of joint education, one to which we have ever since looked as preserving for us a delightful record of a beloved instructor and of happy days, to find this entirely broken asunder from us, every endearing link snapped short off, is sufficiently painful. But it is more painful still to be compelled by a sense of duty to put ourselves forward as the public opponent of such a friend. This Florinus had entered the ministry of the Church, and been admitted to the order of priesthood, when he came to Rome¹, and there published the horrible blasphemy that God was the author of evil²; taking thus the opposite extreme to the Gnostic tenet, but in a still greater degree of impiety. Irenæus put

¹ Euseb. H. E. v. 15.

² Ibid. 20.

forth against him a book entitled "On the Monarchy," in which, while he asserted God's monarchy, yet he proved that He could not be the author of evil. If we may judge from the only remaining fragment (already quoted¹) it was addressed not only to the understanding, but also to the heart of his old companion; and by means of this double appeal, he so far prevailed as to draw him away from his error in that extreme, but it was only to cause him to run into the opposite, and espouse the extravagancies of Valentinus. So unsteady are some minds, so precipitate, that the sobriety and stability of truth never fixes them in their oscillations from extreme to extreme. Irenæus would not leave his friend here, but wrote another work, entitled "Upon the Ogdoad," or number eight, meaning the eight primitive *Æons* of Valentinus². Of his success here we have no account; but, at all events, the blood of his friend was not upon his head.

There is something very singular in the seeming helplessness of the Roman Church in matters of controversy. She was ready enough with her excommunication, but not with her refutation. The contumbers of the heresies which were assailing her own gates are all foreigners. There now arose within her own pale a Presbyter of the name of Blastus, who put forth opinions of the Valentinian cast³, and was

¹ See page 190.

² See Iren. i. 1.

³ Learned men differ about his tenets, which some think were only schismatical, appealing to Euseb. H. E. v. 20. Others, however, more justly argue from the expressions in v. 15., that they were heretical also, and they are supported by the authority of Theodoret. Hæret. Fab. i. 23.

thereupon ejected from the Church. With this act the members of that Church were content. They seem never to have troubled themselves about the machinations of their enemies from without, as soon as they were safe from their treason from within. Irenæus, however, carried on the pursuit beyond the gates, and wrote against him a treatise upon schism. Thus did he follow up the example of Dionysius of Corinth in the wide extent of his episcopal care, and recalled the disinterestedness of the martyrs of his own Church, the walls of whose dungeon could not exclude their anxious view from the utmost boundaries of the Church. So completely was there to him one flock under one shepherd, that he could prosecute the obscure work of converting the rude tribes around him, and at the same time stand forth in the sight of the whole Church as an illustrious champion against all her adversaries. Like David, he would come from feeding sheep in remote pastures, and take his post in front of the array of battle against giants.

The weight of his character was destined to be tried by a remarkable occurrence which took place within the Church. It would seem as if, the grand work of Irenæus having relieved their fears of the common foe, the Churches had begun, after the manner of states, when delivered from a general danger, to quarrel among themselves, and, as usual in such cases, upon points of very minor importance. The Paschal controversy, of which we saw the first symptoms in the conversation of Polycarp with Anicetus, now broke out into an open quarrel, through the intemperance of Victor, the Roman

Bishop¹. Irenæus, although siding with Victor in his way of observing Easter, and thus opposed to his own native Church, would not allow the imperious and uncharitable spirit of the Roman to go unchecked or unchastised. He stepped forward with a letter of mild but firm expostulation with Victor, which at once restored peace among the parties: and if Irenæus had been honoured, like the Roman worthies, with a title expressive of his service, they could not have given him one more expressive than the name which he already bore². We are reminded, in this deference paid to him, of the description of the poet, who represents a sedition raging at its height, and suddenly quelled by the venerated appearance of a man of acknowledged worth and piety³. The Bishops of Rome thus experienced in him the first instance of that rebuke and assertion of independence which they have been obliged to bear at the hands of the Gallican Church.

The Bishop of an obscure diocese in the remote West had attained such influence, as to be enabled to compose the troubles of Christendom. It is singular to behold all faces, not only at Rome, but even at the original seats of the Gospel in the East, turned this way, and looking to a quarter which they had hitherto so much despised as the peculiar abode of darkness, both natural and mental. But Smyrna might be proud in her son, and Asia and Phrygia

¹ Euseb. v. 23, 24. See farther particulars in the Life of Victor.

² Ibid. 24.

³ Æneid i. 148.

might acknowledge, without a blush, their daughters of Lyons and Vienne, which had given so bright a testimony of their faith. Irenæus did not allow them to lose sight of him; but, together with the diligent direction of his own Church, looked out to the general welfare, keeping his eye in all watchfulness on God's golden opportunities. While on his visitations, he explored the trackless forest and sequestered valley, he still maintained himself in full view of the Church by his writings. He addressed the heathen in a short but most useful tract, entitled, "Upon Knowledge," and reverted to his attention to those within the Church in a treatise addressed to a brother named Marcion, in which he gave a lecture on Apostolic preaching. Both these, perhaps, originated from his own missionary necessities, but they were thankfully received by the whole Church. To these he added a volume of various dissertations, which closes the list of his writings¹. Nor was he less diligent in his oral instructions. Like his master Polycarp, he bestowed great care on the rising generation, and the fruits of his labours were enjoyed by the ancient Church in such an eminent writer as Hippolytus², though time has denied them to us.

The remoteness of the spot where he laboured during the far greater part of his life, conceals from us very much of his history; and he is one of that numerous class of men who are famous for their writings, but little known as to the occurrences

¹ Euseb. H. E. v. 26.

² Photius. Bibl. quoted by Lardner, vol. i. p. 401., and by Grabe in his list of quotations prefixed to his Irenæus.

of their lives. We know them well in the spirit, but scarcely at all in the body. Irenæus vanishes from our eyes like a spirit, and the time and manner of his translation from this world to the next are alike unknown. A late writer¹ would deck him with the crown of martyrdom. But he is one of a class who, like our early and rude dramatists, always kill the saints whom they bring upon their stage. All therefore that we can safely suppose is that he breathed his last in a barbarous land, far away from his native shores and early connexions. He had forsaken all for his Master's sake. Although an accomplished scholar, he did not hesitate to leave a region where scholarship was well appreciated,—where the literature of his country had first dawned, and had never ceased to shine,—and was content to dwell in a barbarous land: to exchange friends, companions, and patrons, for rude unlettered men, deference to his learning and talent for ignorant insolence and ridicule upon his peaceful acquirements, and the instruction of well-informed disciples, for the teaching of mere elements. Such a life needed not the crown of martyrdom. To an ambitious mind it had been far more dreadful than

¹ Gregory of Tours. *Hist. Franc.* i. 27. His expressions are hyperbolic; but it may be said in favour of his testimony, that he knew the country. Yet, with all the aid of the author of the *Quæst. et Respons. ad Orthodox.*, which go under the name of Justin, but were a work of the fifth century, and of the term martyr, which is *now* seen in Jerome's Commentary on Isaiah, c. 64., and of the Greek *Menæon*, it cannot prevail against the negative evidence of the deep silence of Tertullian, Eusebius, and Jerome himself in his Catalogue.

martyrdom : it would have been a daily martyrdom, repeated with increasing agony through many long and weary years. It would not have been content with the applause of God coming through the approval of a consciousness of faithful service. It would have desired a less spiritual and more palpable applause. He would have wished to be planted in some conspicuous station of frequent resort, where he could hear with his own ears the grateful and flattering sound of the fame of his writings, and see with his own eyes the finger of admiration singling him out amid throngs of men. He could not have endured to find his fame a mere sound which came to him faintly and interruptedly in a distant wilderness. But then he would not have been the Irenæus, whom all succeeding ages of the Church hold in reverence. He would have been the showy declaimer, not the calm and sober instructor. But he who has won our admiration, was not a son of this world ; he looked not to worldly fame, but pointed all his exertions towards the attainment of an incorruptible crown from an unerring Judge.

VICTOR.

Difference of the chiefs of the Eastern and Western Churches in literary attainments—Victor's character—He is elected Bishop—Causes of the influence of the Church of Rome—Revival of the Paschal controversy—He is opposed by Polycrates—He excommunicates the Asian Churches—Is rebuked and silenced by Irenæus—His proceedings against Theodotus the tanner—Conduct towards the Montanists—Reflections on his policy.

THE contributions of the Western Church to the valuable store of ecclesiastical literature were singularly scanty, until the reformation brought its controversies, and compelled an examination into things which had been long admitted with the tamest acquiescence. Not a single writer of any intrinsic eminence (if we except Minutius Felix and Novatian,) can be mentioned as existing in it during the whole period, unless we call in the host of the Latin barbarians, or enroll upon its list the burning lights of the African Church. This deficiency is rendered still more striking from the utter contrast of the Eastern Church. The transition from darkness to light is not more marked. There almost every see

could boast its writer, and some could show a long and brilliant succession of eloquent and learned men, who enlightened both their own age, and ages to come. To pass from the new Rome to the old, where are the rivals to Gregory Nazianzen and to Chrysostom? Among their predecessors in time we find one or two who have written a few letters still extant; and if we look to their successors in time, we find the same sort of writers, only gradually more ignorant and barbarous. One great cause of this difference was, no doubt, the difference between the Greek and Roman character. The latter was coarse, blunt, practical, essentially sensual, selfish, and worldly-minded,—devoted entirely to one aim, of which it never lost sight,—and this was to gain all that it could out of fellow-man, to be therefore his ruler and the prince of this world. This was followed up with all the perseverance, both in daring and cunning, which attends the possession of but few, and those sensual, ideas, and the conception of but a single object. The Greek, on the contrary, was both most delicately organized and refined by nature, and polished by continual converse with a wide and admirable literature, which had come down from his fathers in a long line of inimitable writers, expressed in a language which loudly called upon him to write, were it but for the sake of enjoying more intensely the exquisite sense of its unrivalled power and beauty. He was full of imagination, quick and plausible in talent—curious, and bustling; ready, therefore, for any undertaking which the occasion presented, but seldom seeking that occasion

with a long and steady view, or improving it and watching it with a fixed eye into the future. Such a character was as excellently suited for literature, as ill adapted for government ; and the Mantuan bard, when he drew this distinction between the Greek and his own countrymen¹, seems to have had somewhat of the feeling of prophecy ; since, from his day, the literature of Rome went backward, and her arms forward ; and the compact form of the Western Church, compared with the distracted state of the Eastern, long after his day, illustrated his position as remarkably as the quarrelling Greek republics, and solid unanimous Roman empire had done before it. Another reason was the seat of the Roman bishop in the capital of the empire ; and, when it had ceased to be the capital, his advantageous position for gathering under his spiritual dominion the rude and unconverted west. The Patriarch of Constantinople, on the contrary, found all Christian around him, from the moment that his see was founded. While, therefore, he was at leisure to write, the Popes could be but mere men of business ; and assuredly never was business which regarded the interests of the transactor more effectually performed. But hence arises the great difficulty of giving most of these men the prominence in ecclesiastical biography which of right belongs to them. The only source of intimate knowledge respecting them is wanting ; and until we come to later periods, the history of the times is too scanty in particulars

¹ *Æneid* vi. 848.

respecting them to allow us to know much about them, without the assistance of their own documents.

The earliest whom we are able to select (after Clement) is Victor. Not that he affords us any knowledge of him from writings of his own, but from his occupying a position both interesting in itself, and critical with regard to that of his successors. He was born probably about the end of the reign of Antoninus Pius¹, and, if at Rome and already a Christian, might at the age of twenty have beheld the blessed Polycarp. A few years later, he might have witnessed the martyrdom of Justin; and might, even as deacon of the Church, have ministered to his help and comfort. Indeed, as the future Pontiff was not likely to be in an obscure station, we may perhaps, without much error, suppose him to have been deacon to Eleutherus, as Eleutherus had been to his predecessor, Anicetus². Thus he might have administered the rites of hospitality for his Church to Hegesippus, and to Irenæus, —have become conversant, in this his office, with great men, and obtained, by opportunities granted to few, much information regarding the state of Christendom. But we have no clue to the discovery of those merits which elevated him to the chair. We can only infer these from his character as developed in the few circumstances known regarding him. He does not appear to have been so much

¹ Supposing him about fifty when he was made bishop.

² Euseb. H. E. iv. 22. This seems to have been a common step to preferment. Thus the Popes Leo I., Hilary, &c.

endowed with superior talents, as to have possessed that force of will and ambitious turn, which will carry the aspirant, even with moderate mental pretensions, to the attainment of influence or rank, provided he have but prudence. He was one of those whose personal influence is every thing, their mental, nothing,—who direct the course of affairs of their own day, but speak not to other times,—who impress the minds of men by the outward exhibition of temper and manners, not by the expression of the inward thought and feeling. And as the ordinary transactions of life are those in which we move, and according to which we must almost always form our opinion of men, it is natural that the possessors of the former qualifications should be preferred to those of the latter ; and that men like Victor, should take the lead in the matters of the world. It is fit that they should. With their minds unabstracted by contemplation, and not flighty with speculation, they can sit down with all their thoughts fixed upon the subject immediately before them : whereas, the minds that are ever grasping at remote consequences, are often too far absent from the present for its due administration, and while they are looking at the stars, neglect the helm.

As a Roman, Victor had the fortitude to suffer as well as the courage to dare ; and the reign of Marcus, which lasted through the twenty best years of his life, would put his spirit to the test. We can readily conceive that he neither shrunk from duty, nor lost sight of the objects which he had proposed to himself, however attended with danger, and undesirable to men of less ambition and courage. Such tem-

pers are seldom improved by persecution, but often rendered more violent, as the history of some of his successors shows. Like the poet's serpent, they come forth from its fiery trial, irritated with the thirst, and outrageous with the heat¹. They have been provoked and not humbled; and having themselves endured, see not why others should not endure. The constraint to which they have been subjected, has but made them envy his power who could enforce it, and sharpened their natural appetite for domineering, at the same time that it has inured it to violence and blood. Such men may still be exemplary in diligence, in charity, in hospitality; but as soon as ever these interfere with the ruling passion of lust of power, all the gentler affections are thrown to the winds, just as the combatant strips off his soft and flowing raiment as a hindrance to his movements.

The reign of Commodus, which gave the Church rest after its long sufferings under Marcus, was very favourable to the desire of the hearts of men like Victor. His character would be raised by the fortitude which he had shown, and with powers rendered more energetic by perils, more under command from experience, and more flexible from constant and trying exercise, he would daily extend his influence over his fellows, and obtain the consideration which he sought. The business, which, through returning prosperity and consequent renewal of frequent communication with the provincial Churches, would now flow in

¹ Georgic. iii. 434.

upon the Roman Church, must have given him many and bright occasions of distinction, and furthered him on the way of promotion. The end was, that, on the death of Eleutherus, which took place at the conclusion of the reign of Commodus, he was chosen to fill the vacant chair. He was seated in it at a critical moment.

From the very first the Church of Rome had been gradually and steadily acquiring a paramount influence among its sisters. The consequence of the town necessarily bestows consequence upon the Church which is seated therein, which will have more members, and those richer and better educated, than other Churches, whose members are gathered from a smaller and poorer body. If then Antioch, the queen of the East, and Alexandria, the glory of Africa, and queen of commerce, conferred such consideration upon their Churches, what must the Queen of the world have conferred upon hers? Flocking, as men did, from every quarter of the world to the imperial city, it could not be otherwise, than that not only its Church should be great in itself, but should extend its influence far and wide, to say nothing of the effects of the kind and hospitable treatment which she showed to all strangers, with whom business at the capital would crowd her gates. Thus, as she could not but have communication with every Church from every quarter, who, through their members, poured their information into her cistern, she became, independently of her own tradition, the general depository of the tradition of the Catholic Church; and whoever desired to know concerning any point of

Christian knowledge, whether on rite or doctrine, could find satisfaction here¹. Late occurrences had given their help to this ever-working cause. Churches had newly been founded in the West, in Germany, in Spain, in Gaul², and in Africa; all of which naturally looked to Rome as their nighest and highest authority among the Apostolic Churches, and therefore regarded her in the light of a metropolis³. The severe persecution under Marcus furthered also her influence. In proportion to the poverty of the flock, and ignorance of the populace, it fell more severely on the provincial Churches, than on that of the capital, where the flock was less marked out for notice, the influence of the priests less powerful, and the people (a mixed multitude) more indifferent to the maintenance of the rites and customs of their fathers. Hence she had the double advantage, both of comparatively little diminution of her grandeur, and of an occasion of adding to it by the liberal contributions which she made to the necessities of her distressed sisters from the coffers of a congregation which was too numerous and wealthy to have its stock very

¹ See the celebrated passage in Irenæus, iii. 3. I confess that Grabe's application of *potior principalitas* to the city, and not to the Church, seems to me perverse. Both Antioch and Alexandria had even now a *principalitas*, or primacy of rank, and therefore Rome one superior still to them. (See Canon 6. of Nicene Council; 2, 3, of 1st Constantinopolitan; 28 of Council of Chalcedon.) *Convenire ad* seems to express *συμβάλλειν* (vid. Euseb. iii. 23. v. 24.) 'to have converse with,' and *necesses est* implies a consequence and not an obligation.

² Iren. i. 3.

³ To Iren. iii. 3. add Tertull. Præser. Hæret. 36.

speedily or seriously diminished ¹. The peace brought by the reign of Commodus added still more to her influence, as a general peace does to that of the state which has most distinguished itself among its confederates by its services during the war. When the clouds of affliction had rolled away, her mountain emerged in superior brilliancy, and was evidently taller than its fellows.

Such a period only wanted such a man as Victor to begin those claims to universal dominion which she has never since abandoned. And when the man had once been given, the occasion would not long be wanting. When the curtain of gloom which had veiled the Church was removed, he found himself on a pinnacle so lofty as to turn his head; and on recovering his calmness, the wide and bright prospect would inspire the desire of possession. Christ's chief vicar could not resist the temptation offered by this first view of the dominion of the kingdoms of the earth, and the Church invited his attempts by her own folly. In the broad blaze of her prosperity, differences were now discerned, which had escaped notice in the dimness of her adversity; and minds which had been long passive in suffering, were eager to be active. Previously it had been sufficient, that every member of the great body was informed by one general spirit, by which all its motions were in harmony with the rest. But

¹ I conceive that while the Roman Church was the most heavily afflicted by a persecution set on foot by Cæsar himself, she was the least sufferer from those which began with the populace.

now they must all be clad alike, and so carnal became the minds of men, that the inward spirit was deemed wanting, if it wanted a mere conventional outward badge. This carnality, which God in its ripeness visited with judgment, by giving up the whole Church in bondage to one man, even now brought her into imminent peril of such a calamity. They must needs quarrel, forsooth, about weeks, and days, and sabbaths, and new moons. It was discovered that the Church of proconsular Asia differed from other Churches in the time of closing her fast preparatory to Easter, and of celebrating the day of the resurrection of the Lord¹. Had she indeed purposely altered the universally received custom, even in a matter more indifferent still than this, she might have been justly charged with a schismatical temper. But it had been her custom from the first, and Polycarp had long ago asserted in its defence the authority of the Apostle John himself. Far from imitating the deference which Anicetus had paid to such authority, Victor had immediate recourse to violent measures. He might count, indeed, upon powerful support, for almost all Christendom was arrayed on his side. For the first time, our eyes, which have beheld the Amphictyonic, the Ionic, the Doric diets of ancient Greece, now behold their revival in ecclesiastical councils. The Church was in motion from one end to the other. It was a convulsive throe, far from betokening a state of sound health. Irenæus, the great champion of orthodoxy, and fresh in the reputation of his great work, assembled the Churches of

¹ See page 81.

Gaul; Palma, Bishop of Amastris, those of Pontus; Theophilus of Cesarea, and Narcissus of Jerusalem, those of Palestine¹. Alas! this general commotion fills the mind with melancholy reflections, foreboding, as we know that it did, that miserable discord which was destined in time to rend asunder its bonds of unity and love. There is in it a kind of military pomp, which declares that the Church was now more militant within itself than against the world without. What was not likely to ensue, when the Church was established in peace, and even in power, if so transitory a gleam of prosperity, coming upon severe chastisement, could provoke such a spirit? Had Victor possessed that meek charity, which, looking forward with a long sight, against the coming of offences, has something in it of the spirit of prophecy, he would have beheld with pain, and not with pride, this indecent tumult, and would have wept over the numerous host which he was conducting.

But the Asian Churches made a gallant resistance, although but a scanty band, against so formidable an enemy, and Victor met with no unworthy antagonist in Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, who presided in their council. He was no common man, as his letter shows, and when Victor reported to him the decision of his own Church, and of the others, and required of him to summon his colleagues, so that they may agree upon a conformity to the prevailing custom, enforcing his requisition with insolent threats, he did indeed summon his brethren, and lay before

¹ See the whole account of this controversy in Euseb. H. E. v. 23. 24.

them his letter; but sent an answer, with their consent, very little to the content of the imperious Roman. "We then (he says) keep the day, without any adulteration of the pure tradition, having neither added nor subtracted any thing. And we have good reason for it: for in Asia repose mighty elements, which shall rise again on the day of the coming of the Lord, on which he is about to come with glory from heaven, and to raise all his saints: namely, Philip the Apostle, who lies asleep at Hierapolis, and two daughters of his, which had grown old in virginity; and the other daughter of his, who, after a life led in the Holy Spirit, reposes at Ephesus¹: and still further, John who reclined on the bosom of the Lord: who was a priest, wearing the golden plate, and witness, and teacher. He rests at Ephesus. And not only he, but moreover Polycarp, who was bishop and witness at Smyrna, and Thrasea of Eumeneia, bishop and witness, who rests at Smyrna. And why need I mention Sagaris, bishop and witness, who rests at Laodiceia; and the blessed Papirius, and Melito the eunuch, who led his whole course of life in the Holy Spirit. He lies at Sardis, awaiting the visitation from heaven of the great Bishop, at which he shall rise from the dead. All these kept the 14th as the day of the Passover, according to the Gospel, in no way transgressing, but following the rule of the faith. And moreover I too, Polycrates, the man who is less than you all, observe it according to the tradition of my kindred, some of whom too I follow: there being seven of my kindred bishops, and I myself am an eighth.

¹ Compare Euseb. H. E. iii. 31.

And all along my kindred have celebrated the day on which the people removed the leaven. I then, sixty-five years old as I am in the Lord, and having conversed with brethren from various quarters of the world, and having perused all Holy Scripture, am not disturbed at your threats. For they who are greater than I have said, 'It is better to obey God than man' I could too mention the bishops who are with me, whom ye have required to be summoned by me; and I have summoned them accordingly. Their names are too numerous for me to write out. They however, notwithstanding my insignificance, approve of and join in this epistle, well knowing that I bear not a gray head in vain, but that all along I have lived a life in the Lord."

This affecting letter, in which meekness and firmness are so happily combined, and the arguments for maintaining the custom are so reasonable, ought to have had its proper effect upon Victor. He who laid so much stress on the tradition from Peter and Paul, should not have slighted that from John; and the Church, whose martyrs, if equally numerous were more obscure, should have held in proper respect the nurses and nurslings of such glorious witnesses to the truth. But Victor had now that spirit within him which defies all argument, and repels all feeling. The lust of power was in his heart; he would be the Augustus of the empire of the Church upon the ruins of its republic, and determined to commence that system, which his successors ultimately established, of enforcing the conformity of all other Churches to his own. When he found himself, therefore, thus thwarted by Poly-

crates, in his tyrannical indignation he took measures to cut off the Asian Churches from the communion of himself and his allies, and wrote circulars in which he proclaimed their utter excommunication. His allies, however, not having such a deep interest in the matter, were cool enough to see the error of such conduct. They were shocked at such a novel exhibition—and on so large a scale—of uncharitableness ; and their fears were awakened at the sight of an act of tyranny, which, if once allowed, might at a future time be exercised against themselves. No good or wise man—and there were many such in those days—could hesitate to condemn the proceeding, and Victor soon discovered that his will had gone farther than his power. He had the mortification to meet with his defeat from that very quarter whither, perhaps, he most looked for help and support. Irenæus, the old guest of the Roman Church, and probably acquaintance if not friend of Victor, stepped forward to check his violent proceedings, and the successor of Anicetus was obliged to bear a rebuke from the successor of Polycarp. While he firmly maintained the propriety of keeping the festival on the Lord's day, Irenæus observed that this was not so much the question as the manner of the introductory fast, which was different in different places, and from old times. And yet notwithstanding this, there had been mutual harmony, and the very disagreement about the fast confirmed their agreement in the faith. Victor's own predecessors had signified their communion with the Churches that disagreed from them on this matter, by sending them the friendly token of the eucharist ; and Anicetus had even in his own

Church received the eucharist at the hands of Polycarp, his opponent on this question. He was wrong, therefore, in cutting off whole Churches from communion, which had done no more than retain an ancient tradition. Nor did he address Victor only, but also the rest of the bishops on the same side, as Victor himself had done.

On this opposition from such a quarter, Victor was obliged to retire from his bold position. If he was not convinced, all the rest were, and he could not proceed single-handed. His name thus unfortunately signified the reverse of his success in the contest, while Irenæus was entitled to the credit of the full meaning of his. But let us do him the justice to believe that he was not aware of the real ungodly motive which instigated him. He might have believed himself to be stirred by zeal in the cause of God's truth. We are all but too ready to make our own cause that of God's, and thus to mistake the carnal motives which direct the former for the spiritual, which serve the latter, and the ministers of our darkness are turned by our perverted imagination into angels of light. But thus doing, we lower God down to a man, the approver of our unsanctified passions, and we worship a man, and that man not the image of God, but the workmanship of our own hands. We offer sacrifices to it of our own invention, and bloody will such sacrifices ever be: they will not be the slaughter of our lusts and bad passions, the offering of the holy desires of our hearts; but we shall resemble those men who used to usurp another's sacrifice; our worldly interest is served at the expense of our neighbour; from his goods we

offer and not from our own: and his bruised and contrite heart, made thus by our violence, is the spiritual sacrifice which accompanies our outward oblations of his comforts, possessions, and joys. So does false zeal differ from true. The one devotes itself, the other its neighbour: the one surrenders all its will to God, the other endeavours to rob another of his will, under the pretence of administering to God's glory: the one has the image of man in the temple of his heart, the other the indwelling Spirit of God. Thus Victor thought to exalt God's glory, by usurping the liberty of his fellows, and mistook their joint submission to himself for unity in the Spirit of Christ. A Christian bishop should not have fallen into the delusion of the unconverted Paul, but he should have followed him in the lowly charity, as he professed to do in the pure faith, of his converted state.

(A.D. 194.) He was, however, a watchful shepherd, although the infirmity of an impetuous temper may have sometimes led him to mistake the feeding of the sheep in another quarter of the pasture, not immediately under his own eye, for their straying into the wilderness. He ejected from the fold a most destructive wolf, in the person of Theodotus the tanner, who first broached within the Church the heresy which maintained Christ to be a mere man¹. But this very act shows the violence of his conduct towards the Asian Churches, when he could confound in the same ruthless condemnation men who differed from him merely in a custom which they had received

¹ Euseb. H. E. v. 28.

from Apostolic predecessors, and a man who introduced a novel and God-denying heresy. It seems, that the indiscriminate violence with which the bolt of excommunication has been fulminated from the hands of the imperious Pontiffs of Rome has a very early origin, and that resistance to their dictates has ever been with them the same thing as resistance to the truth.

This rash and imperious temper must have led him into many errors, as it has so many of his successors. One of these was his hasty approval of the prophetic claims of the Montanists: and what puts his blindness in the strongest light is, that he was disabused of his error by the representations of Praxeas, who, in almost a few months after, was notorious as the promulgator of a most dangerous heresy. Being forward to answer any appeal to his authority, and gratified, no doubt, by a submissive message from these schismatics, who were eager, amid the abandonment of their neighbours who knew them, to secure a powerful friend in one who could not so readily know them as effectually help them, he issued out letters of peace and reconciliation in favour of them to the Churches of Phrygia and Asia. Praxeas, however, arriving from Asia, where he had witnessed their proceedings, gave him such an account of them, and so urged upon him the precedents of his predecessors, that he revoked his letters, and rejected their claims¹. He had, however, the merit

¹ Tertull. adv. Prax. l. who does not mention the name of the Pope: but the mention of *predecessors* who condemned Montanus (who began under Soter, to whom succeeded in order

of not being ashamed or afraid to retract a wrong opinion, and justifies us in the charitable belief, that his rashness was owing to a consciousness of integrity, as much as to an overweening estimate of his own wisdom and power.

(A.D. 201.) These transactions were in the sunshine of his prosperity, and it would be unfair to form a harsh opinion of him upon these, when his conduct under adversity, which soon again overclouded the Church, has not been related to us. We see him during that period only which was most unfavourable to the exhibition of his character; and judging from this alone, we should perhaps be like one who should judge of the merits of a transparent painting by the deep shades which are laid on its reverse. He received the pontificate from the hands of his predecessor precisely in that condition, and at that crisis, which perhaps would have stimulated one of greater meekness and prudence to make some pretensions to extraordinary authority. But when the time for suffering came, he might have borne up (and we may conclude that he did bear up) as nobly against the assaults of the heathen, as he had boldly sought to rule over his brethren. From being the fiery Peter, who said, "Lord, here are two swords," and smote the servant of the high-priest, he became that Peter who laid down his life for his Master's sake. The hand of persecution came heavy upon the Church towards the end of his life, though he lived not to see the havoc which it made in the tenth

Eleutherus and Victor), and the time of the promulgation of his heresy by Praxeas, point to Victor, with whose headlong character the transaction is in perfect harmony.

year of the emperor Severus¹. In the ninth year of that emperor's reign he was released from the troubles of an eventful pontificate of ten years' duration².

His occupation of the chair was indeed short ; but there is no man and no government in the whole line and history of the Roman bishops which ought to excite a deeper interest, or move more serious thoughts in the mind of the reader. The man stands at the head of a band of daring and arbitrary men, the precursor of the First Stephen, of the Seventh Gregory, of the Third Innocent, who laboured to raise a temporal dominion upon a spiritual foundation. And his government is not only remarkable for the first attempt at that object which was at last realised, but is also signalised as the unhappy period in which the Universal Church showed the first fatal symptoms of those divisions which were to tear her limbs asunder, disclosed the first throbs and heavings of those convulsions, which were only to be quieted by the chains of Rome, or the poison and dagger of the Mahometan. What a fearful lesson is this to the rampant spirit of our day, which exults in trampling under foot every means of Christian unity, and seems to consider schism at the strongest proof of sincerity. But let such reckless thinkers be assured, that laxity of morals does not lead more surely through civil anarchy to despotism, than laxity of creed through religious anarchy to the grinding tyranny of superstition. This has ever been the course of God's government in the spiritual, no less than in the moral

¹ Euseb. H. E. vi. 2.

² Ib. H. E. v. 28.

world. Such distraction necessarily begets a general indifference, and therefore a general degeneracy both of faith and practice. But when corrupt man becomes a vessel incapable of any longer containing the waters of life in their purity, God degrades him to some ignoble purpose, and exacts the penalty of his disobedience by putting him under a more carnal form of religion. The abuser of the light of the Patriarchal Church was put under the yoke of the carnal ordinances of the law from Mount Sinai ; and he who corrupted the faith of Moses and the Prophets was bound in the inexplicable folds of Pharisaic tradition and ceremony, which the Rabbis have drawn round him in tighter entanglement down to this very day. We have seen but too clearly the ordained minister of God's punishment of the unruly Christian. And can we, fresh from his chains and scourge, and while they are still held up before our eyes, if we will but see, glory in the folly and wickedness which will most assuredly bring us under them again ?

APOLLONIUS.

Cause of the slow progress of Christianity in the Roman Senate—Reflections on the conversion of Apollonius—Extreme peril to the Christians from the system of slavery—Apollonius informed against, and condemned by the Senate—His defence and death.

It is a common remark, that the lower classes of society are the more tenacious of the customs, the feelings, and the modes of thinking, which they have derived from their forefathers. This is, however, true only with respect to ordinary changes, and most untrue, with regard to those essential revolutions, whether for good or for bad, which alter the entire face of society, and give a new turn to the mind of man. The lower the depth of the water, the less is it agitated by the gusts and squalls which come from the mountains, and the capricious influence of princes puts into fluctuation only the upper layers of the tide of society. But it is also the lowest depth which is soonest and most violently agitated by the submarine volcano, and fundamental

changes ever commence from below. Furthest removed from the dominion of ever-shifting fashion, and varying opinion, the lower orders are at leisure to concentrate their thoughts, which are continual in proportion to their paucity, upon some single prominent question, deeply seated in human nature, and essentially involved in the present constitution of society. When such a proposition has once been distinctly set before them, they never lose sight of it before they work it out, and great are the advantages which they possess for the furtherance of their work. Their opinions are screened from the perilous notice of government until they make their appearance in a formidable attitude, and then they are certain of obtaining abettors in the classes above; partly from conscientious consent, partly from the compliance of a dastardly spirit, partly from a vain love of popularity, and partly from the desire of aggrandizement of plunder and of revenge. Some poor fishermen of Galilee began (humanly speaking) that moral and spiritual revolution which has not only ruined and raised kingdoms, but has also changed the very heart and mind of man. And a few humble priests commenced that reformation which has shaken, and is still shaking, the opinions of the most civilized portion of Christendom. The stately and enduring oak springs up from depths below. It is only such as the transitory moss and leatherwort, that has both origin and existence above. How conspicuous is God's providence in appointing the birth-place of Christianity, and what a proof has He afforded of its divine efficacy! Set upon the upper surface of society, it must have withered with-

out taking root. He buried it at a depth where all seed of mere human device and wisdom must have rotted and perished.

So slow, however, is the growth of opinion upward, especially where worldly interests are not in view, that even the reign of Commodus, when Christianity was in the middle of the second century of its existence, presents the first example of the profession of the Gospel adopted by a member of the Roman senate. Two such names brought together in one sentence, strike the mind with a lively interest. We wonder for a moment what can be the result of so strange an association, and much do we congratulate ourselves on finding that the instrument of heavenly conversion has at length fixed its hold upon the very vitals of worldly principality and power.

Apollonius was remarkable, not only for his rank, as a senator of Rome, but was also distinguished by his acquirements,—he had gained a high reputation in philosophy¹, which according as it dazzled the shallow mind with its unsubstantial brilliancy, or humbled the deep inquirer with its most unsatisfactory answers, was a direct enemy or indirect minister to the Gospel. To him, as to Justin Martyr and Tatian, it proved to be the latter, and in despite of still greater obstacles from worldly interests. His sincerity and resolution were put to a greater test in proportion to his rank, particularly at a time when

¹ Euseb. E. H. v. 21., which passage contains all we know about Apollonius. He is not there directly styled a senator (as he is by Jerome in his Catalogue), but this rank is reasonably inferred from his narrative.

philosophy was the reigning favourite at the court of Marcus Aurelius. Perhaps it was the very violence with which its pretensions were supported by men who thus at once flattered the emperor, and gratified their own wounded pride, which turned his serious notice towards a sect so much, and every where, spoken against. The fury of their railing, and extravagance of their calumny, might have awakened his suspicion that there was something in this sect which deserved inquiring into. He could not entertain a very favourable opinion of such men as Crescens, and might therefore think that there must be something good in that to which they could be so implacably hostile. It assuredly could not be badness of morals (however they may pretend) which gave the real offence to so unprincipled a tribe; and foolishness of tenets might have been safely left to a derision less important than theirs. The Gospel of Christ called out to him from another quarter also. The degradation of that august order to which he belonged, drove the patriot for refuge from its humiliating and afflicting sight into the recesses of his studies and meditations. From the days of Cicero, the pursuit of philosophy had amused, if not consoled, his wounded spirit. But if, even then, the remedy was inadequate, how much more so in the disastrous days of Commodus, when all the resources of the most servile and iniquitous flattery only served to deepen the malignity of the tyrant, who could see a rival even in the miserable corpse of the dignity and power of that assembly: when men were daily compelled to endeavour to save their bodies by the precious sacrifice of their moral feelings, and lost

after all the dear-bought object. A philosophy, hitherto unknown to him, was required by Apollonius here. What comfort should Stoic apathy, or Epicurean enjoyment, administer under such circumstances, to an ingenuous spirit? Not to feel was a wilful self-delusion; and to enjoy, was to mock the misfortunes of his country. So, first perhaps from without, and then again from within, Apollonius was driven to the resources of the Gospel of Christ. It would have been interesting to know the manner of his first contact with it, and to see how that conqueror of the powers of this world made his first approaches against a senator of ancient Rome. Whether a wife, a sister, a friend, or even a slave, taking advantage of a favourable moment, may have timidly whispered its first tidings into his ear, or God's mercy, under the appearance of chance, may have thrown the Christian writings in his way, we cannot ascertain. But we may in some degree, although inadequately, enter into his feelings as conviction grew upon him. As a man in need of all its comfort, he must have longed to find it; and then again, as a man of this world, he must have trembled as he approached it. If it soothed sorrow, it demanded high wages for its good service. Rank and wealth, reputation and life, were to be freely given up in the moment that they were demanded; and the cunning adversary of salvation might often ask him what was left after all these had been surrendered? But the question with him would serve only to make him examine with greater diligence that which the Gospel asserted was left, and not only left, but clad with glorious and immortal

raiment, compared to which all that had been taken away was as dross to fine gold ; or rather, as the vilest thing which man can imagine to the most precious that the most enlightened understanding can conceive, and in conceiving acknowledge its utter incapability of duly appreciating. A senator of Rome, and a Christian ! how can it be ? he may have asked of himself, and gazed at the senatorial trappings in which he was clad. In the midst of his meditations a sudden glance would suggest this flat contradiction, and the excluded world would rush in for a momentary re-occupation of his mind. A hurried and discouraging view would then present itself of mocking friends, of afflicted relatives, and he would shrink from the breach of laws and customs delivered to him both for his obedience and his enforcement by his country ; and he would deprecate, in times so lax, an example of disregard to public institutions set in a station so prominent as his. Thus his firmness would be occasionally severely shaken, and on every repeated examination of the Gospel, the same result of growing conviction would come forth, and the same adverse feelings follow. But the feelings would become weaker as the result grew stronger ; until, in the end, conviction remained uncontested, and the senator of Romulus and Numa had been lost in the disciple of Christ and his Apostles. How difficult it is to enter into the feelings of these converts ! and yet how instructive is the lesson which we thence learn ! For how blessed are we in proportion to the difficulty ! The rich man can scarcely appreciate the struggles of the poor.

And now, with his purple suggesting to him the blood of the Lord, and its broad strip the broad nails which pierced his hands and his feet, with his name inscribed not only in the list of the Senate, but in the book of everlasting life, and being an attendant not only on the assembly of the Senate, but also on that of the Church¹, how shall he reconcile these two callings of the world and of Christ? The world repelled him on the very threshold. An idolatrous offering of wine and incense was customary before a Senator took his seat for deliberation. Even as a Philosopher, who was allowed to neglect the duty of sacrifice², he could not escape its performance here. But the rite was the very touchstone which the heathen employed for obtaining the disavowal of the Christian name. He must therefore absent himself from the debates; and this, perhaps, as an indignant patriot, he had long done, and retired from that court of registration of the Emperor's irresistible will, and theatre of crouching servility. It would be more difficult for one in his situation to avoid all attendance on the public spectacles; but his absence would pass unnoticed for a considerable time. Under the character of a Philosopher he might be excused, as we have seen, from the observance of religious duties, and would not attract suspicion by declining public offices. The retreat of his country-seat would shelter him from numerous other means of the discovery of his new opinions, such as the laurel and lights

¹ Tertull. de Coron. mil. 13. But his play on the *Latus clavus* cannot be expressed in English.

² Tertull. Apol. 46.

at his door. Thus he might have proceeded for some period in his Christian profession, without any outward act of commission or omission to challenge observation

(A.D. 186.) But there was in every Roman family a secret enemy, set there by the curse of God upon the iniquity of slavery, and none experienced its bitterness more painfully than the Christians¹. It was fit that they should, since the conversion of a slave into a brother in Christ might have removed it. Small households perhaps were generally secured from discovery by such means. But it is evident, that the conversion of the large retinue of a man of senatorian rank could scarcely be accomplished without the certainty of discovery. Where human nature was so vile and degraded, the greatest caution was necessary in choosing the objects of so perilous a confidence, and the communication of master with slave, becoming more distant as the number was greater, gave him but little opportunity of discovering characters in the first instance, and of making his approaches to confidence without suspicion in the second. He might, therefore, pass his whole life without finding the means of converting all his household, and to the last hour his home (if we should call it a home) contained in its bosom at least one minister of the great Accuser², ready at any moment to bring him to the touchstone of his faith. A new convert of rank must have been surrounded by a host of such men, and it was by one of them that

¹ Tertull. ad Nation. i. 8. Apol. 7.

² Rev. xii. 7.

Apollonius was betrayed. His home, as that of every noble Roman, contained a prison in a palace, and the fear, if not the sight of the lash, was the main stay of the discipline of its inmates. In such natures, malignity is often unsubdued by the best treatment, and even the good affections are fickle. A look or a word, to say nothing of a blow, will rouse the most diabolical spirit of revenge in a bosom where it could not have been suspected. Never were the rights of human nature outraged with impunity, never are they trampled on without its inflicting a mortal sting. The old serpent seems to take full possession of it as soon as it is laid low to crawl upon its belly, and against its bite the Redeemer has promised no cure, but, on the contrary, has cursed the ground wherever the foot of its bruiser may tread.

The man, if he knew the law, must have known that he had nothing to gain, but everything to lose, by giving this information against his master. He must therefore have been led, not by the prospect of lucre, but by the blind infatuation of revenge. What a dreadful state of society was that, in which men of the most gentle temper could not avoid giving fatal offence to those nearest their person; and even an angel could not be secure against raising a devil in his neighbour's breast. The cunning curiosity of his slavish nature might have tempted this informer on previous occasions to dog his master's steps, especially if he went forth at night. The Church, for good reasons, was wont to assemble at that unseasonable time¹, and thither Apollonius might have

¹ Tertull. ad Uxor. ii. 4.

been traced. But without such direct means of discovery, a Christian could not but disclose, despite of every precaution, a thousand minute circumstances, if not peculiarities, which, being keenly observed, and acutely put together by servile diligence, ever watchful and clever in such occupation, must have revealed to an attendant the secret of the apostasy of his master from Capitoline Jove to the crucified Jew. Like the insects, which in their rage lose their lives with their stings, so this man did not survive the effects of his blind fury, if indeed it was by fury that he was prompted. By a law, which was probably designed quite as much for the purpose of casting an odium and impressing a brand-mark on the Christian profession¹, as for the security of the citizen, he was put to a cruel death. But this, however it may serve to deter accusers, did not acquit the accused, and Apollonius was brought before the tribunal of the Prætorian prefect Perennis. This officer used the usual dissuasions, entreating him that he would save his life, and be unwilling to lose it². But Apollonius had in his mind a tribunal, the future Judge of which had said, "If a man hateth not his own life, he cannot be my disciple³," and, "He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it⁴." On his resolute denial, Perennis had to pass sentence upon him, but, on discovering that he was a Senator, he referred his case to the

¹ Its purpose would seem little doubtful, if it be the same as that mentioned as proceeding from Aurelius, by Tertul. Apol. 5.

² Tertull. c. Gnost. ii.

³ Luke xiv. 26.

⁴ Matt. x. 39.

decision of that body, which was summoned for the occasion.

Great must have been the sensation created throughout the city at the news of a Senator confessing to Christ, and a crowded house would await the appearance of Apollonius. He used none of the forms of supplication with which members of that body were wont to go round and secure friends¹. He had already secured the only Friend who could really help him. And when the time arrived for his defence, he delivered in the presence of all a most eloquent apology for the faith, which was long preserved in the Church, although the carelessness of the intervening ages of ignorance has suffered it to be lost, together with most of the treasures of the same period. It would have been a most interesting document. We should then have seen the kind of arguments which he used with men of such rank, and have obtained an insight into the notions which they entertained of the new religion, and the peculiar obstacles which it encountered among them. Many and singular are the reflections which occur to the mind in contemplating this scene. Then it was that the Senate, which had heard of the name of Christ, heard also His true doctrine. That illustrious body, which had given audience to the ambassadors of suppliant kings, now listened in astonishment to the ambassador of the King of kings claiming their obedience, and heard news of a kingdom, before which the violence of their armies, and the insinuation of

¹ Tacit. Annal. ii. 29, &c.

their treacherous policy, would be equally powerless. In the place where Cato had so often insisted on the destruction of Carthage, where Cicero, in a torrent of fiery eloquence, had denounced the conspirator Catiline, and hurled his furious invective against Antony, where Pliny in tuneful declamation had paid his tribute of flattery to the master of the world,—there Apollonius proclaimed the fate of every earthly kingdom, denounced the conspiracy of the powers of darkness, arraigned iniquity in high places, and sang forth the praises of the Master of this world and of the world to come. They who had given orders to consult the Sibylline books, were now instructed from the prophecies of the Holy Spirit ; and for the sacrifices which those volumes enjoined, were invited to partake of the one great sacrifice. To the soldier he preached the warfare of the Spirit against flesh, to the lawyer the law of the Gospel, to the priest the priesthood of Christ.

Never had an advocate of Christ addressed so illustrious a tribunal. The Apostle of the Gentiles himself had pleaded but before the shadowy majesty of provincial governors and subject kings ; the blessed Ignatius appeared before Trajan, only to answer a stern and brief interrogation, and proceed on his journey to martyrdom ; and, if Quadratus presented his apology in person to Adrian, he did not recite it. But Apollonius addressed the assembled majesty of the Roman empire, the chief council of the civilized world, in which had been laid up as in a sanctuary its wisdom, its dignity, its authority ; to which had belonged the distribution of the kingdoms of the earth, and the disposal of the lives and

fortunes of their rulers. We may portray in imagination the variously-marked countenances of this august audience, as the herald of the Gospel propounded to it the terms of everlasting life and death. The profligates, and they also were many, would some of them display the scorn of a seared conscience and hardened heart; and others, like Felix, might inwardly tremble, and like Festus, outwardly pronounce him mad. The man of Stoic assumption of virtue would despise him for the lowliness of which he displayed and preached. The pretender to human wisdom would ascribe to him foolishness. The patriot, who sighed after the expired glories of the republic, and adored its relics, would be indignant at this breach of the customs and religion of Cato and Brutus. The soldier would not away with such a violation of the discipline of good government; the lawyer would exclaim against broken statutes and despised prescription; and the priest would not endure this audacious insult upon his gods. They, however, heard him out, but none said, "We will hear thee again upon this matter." He was condemned, and beheaded.

Such was the sower of the first seed in the assembly of the conscript fathers. He had past rapidly across the field, flinging his seed, and appeared but for a moment before our eyes. He came suddenly, and as suddenly he is gone. We have not seen him dig, neither have we beheld him reap. Alas! his lot was to sow upon a most unkindly soil, where no heavenly seed could penetrate, but lay in waste on the surface, to be carried away by the fowls of the air or any other worldly accident. A

grain or two may perhaps have found a chink, and sunk into one or two hearts, and begun there a harvest which was reaped but late and scantily. Even after Cæsar had become the conscious servant of Christ, his senate, at the head-quarters of the old religion of the empire, followed him with scarcely half its numbers into the assembly of the Church¹. This defence therefore, if it strongly moved a bosom here and there, supplied little more to the great body of its princely hearers, than a new topic of conversation for the day; and the calm death of its speaker, if it stirred up one to admiration, another to pity, was, after all, but one of those brutal spectacles of blood from which alone the gross mind of this cruel people could derive sufficient excitement. It could be roused but by the spur of the sight of stabbed gladiators and lacerated beast-fighters, and their moral eye, affected by the reverse disease of those who mistake scarlet for blue, saw all objects of delight under the colour of blood. But God is not slow in avenging his slaughtered saints, and in visiting with his wrath those who have ill-treated his messengers. If we were to point out a period in which the senate was most insulted and degraded, and suffered most severely from the furious sword of a tyrant, it would be that of Commodus. Nothing

¹ Tertullian, *Apol.* 37, writing about twelve years after this, speaks in a passage where great allowance must be made for exaggeration, of Christians in the senate. Yet, about two hundred years after the death of Apollonius, their majority there is at least questionable. See Lardner's *Credibility*, &c. vol. ix. p. 150.

is without its service to God's economy, and such monsters as he had it in unconscious charge to scourge the despisers of God's commandments, rejecters of his proffers of mercy, and slayers of his prophets.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA.

His position as a writer—His sojourn in Greece, his tour, and arrival at Alexandria—General character of Alexandrian literature—Catechetical school there—In the mastership of this he succeeds Pantænus—His pupils—A persecution drives him from Alexandria—Return and resignation of his chair to Origen—His sojourn in Cappadocia and Syria—Allegorical interpretation of Scripture—Character of the Gnostic—Adoption of the language of Greek philosophy—Account of his three great works—Advantages and disadvantages of his usage of philosophical language—His style—Defence of his cautious reserve upon doctrine—Brief enumeration of the chief doctrines which occur in his works—Altered character of the Church.

THE very name and title of this Father call up a crowd of interesting thoughts. The first suggests to us his saintly namesake of Rome, and carries us for a moment to the capital of the empire, and principal see of Christendom ; while the other conveys us to a city, which alone, of all in the world, has obtained for itself an immortal name, without violently winning it by the conquests of war, but purchasing it by the honourable and innocent means of literature and commerce. This cluster of reflections

becomes still more varied and comprehensive, when it is suggested to us that Clement might have been an Athenian¹, and thus we find in him a link between the Piræus and the Pharos—between the great mother of literature, and her fairest and best portioned daughter. The man whose name leads us into such a region of thought ought to have been no common man, neither was he. As a writer, he goes at least as far beyond his namesake as an accomplished Alexandrian may be expected to excel a plain Roman. But, moreover, he stands prominent at the head of a school, which, whatever may be its defects, was mainly instrumental in extending the converting power of the Church into the regions of literary rank and talent, by means of its profound learning and brilliant composition. And although in order to enter such circles, it was obliged to appear in their conventional dress, yet was this done in all sincerity, and under impressions of a necessity which we are now unable to estimate. As a man, he shares the misfortune of other great writers, the interest of whose works has been such as to absorb men's curiosity concerning the author. Few particulars of his life have been preserved to us, and even these encumbered with difficulties. Yet the man whose writings call us back to Philo, and onward to Origen, had they even been less numerous and less able, puts in an irresistible claim to a place in the ecclesiastical biography of his age.

Titus Flavius Clement² was born somewhere about the middle of the second century. His names

¹ Epiphan. Hær. 32. 6.

² Euseb. vi. 13.

loudly proclaim a Roman origin ; and it is singular, that all three belonged to the imperial family founded by Vespasian. He has been called not only an Alexandrian, but an Athenian also (as we have already seen) ; and were we allowed to indulge in the conjecture that the first designated his principal place of abode, and the theatre of his fame, and the latter the place of his birth ¹, we should be led into a delightful train of speculation. In that land, the parent and nurse of the philosophy which he so much admired, we can surround him immediately with appropriate scenery and company. The Lyceum, the Academy, and the Porch, indeed, were now either deserted, or trodden by the profane feet of pensioned Sophists, who bore the same resemblance to their illustrious predecessors, as the wrecks, moral, political, and architectural, of Greece, did to their former selves, as they existed in the palmy state of prosperity. Yet the admonitions of the spot would not speak less loudly to him than they had to the philosophical Cicero ; and the genius of the place still remained to inspire the study of her literary treasures, if not to suggest an addition to them. How interesting is the thought, that he might have commenced his intimate and extensive acquaintance with her poets, her orators, her historians, and her philosophers, amid the very scenes which they describe, amid the monuments of the facts which they detail, amid the air which they breathed ; and that thus he

¹ So Cave, both in his *Apostolici* and *Histor. Literar.* And that Egypt was not his native country seems to follow from *Strom.* i. 11.

stamped all upon his mind, as it were with the seal of living forms ! How different must have been both the nature and enjoyment of such scholarship from the vague and lifeless information of our own, which we are but too fortunate if we can call into definite form and life by a visit to the scenes recorded, or fix and animate by the plastic power of a fervid and yearning imagination.

But if human learning and philosophy plied him here with their continued invitations, so also did divine learning and philosophy ; and if he was not brought up from the cradle in their principles, it is here that he would naturally have imbibed them. The Church of Athens, so contrasted with her city in the general obscurity of her history, was now shedding a bright and steady light ; and not long ago, Quadratus and Aristides had sent forth from amid her courts a voice of able defence for the Christian cause throughout the empire. But Clement's curious mind was not to be satisfied with the information of a Church, which could only produce, on her own independent authority, the tradition which she had received from St. Paul, when there were others which could impart that which they had derived from Peter, and John, and James, and Mark. Nor were her teachers capable of affording him all the knowledge that he wished to acquire. Therefore, according to a common fashion of those times, he set out upon a tour in quest of instruction, and travelled far and wide, attending in various places upon various masters of divine truth. One such he found at hand in Greece itself, another in Italy. From both of these, one of whom was of Cœlosyria, the other of Egypt,

he learned the tradition of the Oriental Churches; and not satisfied with that, went into the East itself, and explored those very regions, putting himself under a teacher in each. But it was in Egypt that he was gratified with complete satisfaction. Here he fell in with the learned and enterprising Pantænus¹, of whom he speaks in these terms. "He, though found last, in ability was first. I found rest when I had hunted down this game in the coverts of Egypt. Truly Sicilian was this bee, and culling from the flowers of the meadow of the Apostles and Prophets, he engendered in the minds of his hearers a pure knowledge²." But let not any one compare Clement's change of teachers with the restless dissatisfaction of the unconverted Justin, who exchanged one school of error for another; nor with that of some modern schismatics, who go from one pastor to another, continually approaching the goal of fanaticism or scepticism. Clement did not go from doctrine to doctrine, nor forego the instructions of one teacher to admit in their stead those of another. He was accumulating various knowledge through various channels from the same source, and his teachers had all preserved in a direct line of succession, father receiving from son, the pure tradition of the blessed teaching of the holy Apostles, Peter, and James, and John, and Paul, those Gnostics as it were of the Apostles, who, having been favoured with peculiar communication with the Lord, may be presumed to

¹ He does not mention him by name, but such is the probable conjecture of Eusebius, H. E. v. 11.

² Strom. i. 11.

have had many things divulged to them which had been hidden from the rest. How is the indolent incuriosity of our days put to shame by the earnest love of truth which incited Clement and many more thus to compass sea and land in its investigation! How mean, how weak, do we appear! Although the possession of the truth be disputed, we will not turn over the books of a library to satisfy ourselves of its real owners, but will imitate the iniquity of an indolent judge, who recommends an equal division of the property, rather than be troubled with the inquiry. And then, forsooth, we take credit to ourselves for liberality.

Thus Clement settled at last in Egypt. Alexandria was the place of his abode. This city, which had not been raised into existence when Athens was at the height of her glory, had now long snatched from her the wreath of superior learning. Its literature, both sacred and profane, was of a peculiar cast; and it is necessary to the elucidation of the style and opinions of the earliest Alexandrine father, that we should briefly consider it.

The very climate and face of the country disposed the mind to inward speculation, by indisposing it to outward observation. The violent heats compelled the body to inactivity, and the mind to dreaminess; and even if the body were active, the uniform expanse of swamp or sand had nothing wherewith to feed the imagination, and failed to supply, from outward observation, that sound mental health and vigour which it alone can give. Hence nature had made it the native soil of idealists and mere scholars. Powerful moral causes increased this predisposition.

The Greek sovereigns had patronised the literature of the tongue and country of their ancestors, and this, on its introduction, had been advanced to that stage as to have pre-occupied every department of thought. No room was left for originality, save such as vigorous sense refused to occupy. Hence the prevalence of an imitative cast of mind, or, if the mind attempted to work new ground, truth having been exhausted, mystery alone remained to engage her, while the deeper she dug, the more unfruitful became the rock. The kind of authors produced under such a state of things may have been safely presumed, had all their works perished. The philosophers of this school were mystics, its poets versifying antiquaries, its men of general literature grammarians and mathematicians. The school of philosophy most in favour was of course that which afforded most indulgence in speculation, and most scope to all the dreaminess of mysticism. The works of Plato fascinated even the Jew, who settled there with rare privileges, and rising to wealth amid the influx of commerce, was brought within the charmed ring of Greek literature. With him began the mixture of human philosophy with divine revelation, which afterwards was adopted by the literary champions of the Church of this place, of whom Clement is the earliest whose works have reached us.

The peculiar situation of Alexandria in the map of Christendom soon compelled the teachers of its Church to a system to which they were already so well inclined. The whole East was at her eastern gate, Africa expanded her unbounded continent from her western and southern, her northern opened upon

a sea which washed the shores of the greatest part of the known world. Thus she was the mart of all nations, and her Church had a field of labour wide beyond that of any other, Rome itself not excepted. The conversion of the heathen, so continually occupying her attention, was of course soon formed into a system, and thus originated her celebrated catechetical school, in which the heathen were instructed previously to their admission into the Church. Since, in most cases, the Gospel could not with any prudence be nakedly proposed at once, it was the business of the teachers to prepare the mind for its reception, by clearing away the weeds of superstition and passion, through a preparatory course of natural religion and moral philosophy¹. For this purpose the Greek philosophy was found most serviceable², and in every case it was most convenient as a neutral ground, upon which Christian and heathen might meet to confer³.

(A.D. 193.) Clement, on his arrival in Egypt, found Pantænus at the head of this celebrated institution, which, beginning with him, can show a succession of illustrious men, through the extent of half a century, such as no other has ever yet been able to boast⁴. Pantænus had arrived at this distinction through a

¹ See Strom. i. 55. ii. 95, 96. From the two last it appears, that three years was commonly the time given to this previous instruction.

² Strom. i. 28. 80, &c.

³ Euseb. E. H. vi. 19.

⁴ Pantænus, Clement, Origen, Heracläs (afterwards Bishop), Dionysius (afterwards Bishop). See Euseb. v. 10. for a brief account of this school.

course of good service, in which his mission to India is pre-eminent¹. The instruction of such a master may well be hailed by Clement as the discovery of a treasure long sought in vain, and he put it to the utmost account. Those were golden days, when the teacher united the depth of learning, which was necessary both to recommend his doctrine to those without, and to guard from heretical seduction those that were within, with the practical experience and activity of the missionary. Fully sensible of the benefit, Clement pushed his studies with such vigour, that his name became the most famous among those of his schoolfellows; and when Pantænus, either by entirely resigning, or by giving up the tuition of the lower class², made room for the accession of new talent, Clement was the man upon whom the choice fell³. If it had been a blessed privilege to be the pupil of such a man, what must it have been to be his partner or successor? What a height did he seem

¹ Euseb. E. H. v. 10. Cave, Dupin, Lardner, &c., suppose this mission to have been after his appointment to the school, which he resumed on his return, Clement being his deputy in the interval. They seem to me (misled by Jerome) to have quite misunderstood Eusebius (whom they thus make inconsistent with himself in the compass of one passage, as Lardner owns), and to have mistaken his resumption of the account of his mastership, after a digression about his Indian mission, for an assertion of Pantænus's resumption of the office after his mission. The concluding words of the passage certainly leave the impression of the Indian mission preceding his mastership, whatever authority we may give to Jerome.

² Which latter Clement himself seems afterwards to have done (see below), and Origen certainly did. Euseb. E. H. vi. 15.

³ Euseb. E. H. vi. 6.

to have ascended, when he sate on the same chair with him whom he had so long looked up to with reverential affection from below ; and how must that affection have been increased, when in daily putting his mind to work for the materials of his lectures, it daily reminded him, both by its disposition and acquirements, of the hand of its trainer, and he daily dealt forth from a store which had been in a great measure supplied by him, and wholly accumulated under his original direction. If we may judge from the example of Origen, his labours were severe and unintermitting. He was engaged with successive pupils from morning to night¹. But among these were many whose progress richly rewarded all his toil, and repaid him with a friendship which the fame of their after-life made as illustrious as it was pure. Such was Alexander, afterwards Bishop of Jerusalem, who was a hearer also of Pantænus, and such was Origen, whose name it is sufficient to mention.

Happy, under the heaviest burden of its toils, must have been Clement's present occupation. It brought its own reward—rich, early, and lasting. For surely no position of usefulness can be more blissful, than that of the teacher of sacred lore, when he feels himself competent to his task, and has able and docile pupils for hearers. He is sure that not an atom of labour is misspent in its effect upon his own mind, but that in proportion as he improves others, he improves himself. In condescending to the minds of his pupils, he does not lower his own, nor in gathering information for them, does he op-

¹ Euseb. E. H. vi. 15.

press his memory with common detail, cumbrous and uninstructional to himself. So does divine differ from human learning. Its minutest atom is a lively and life-giving spark, through which the pervading spirit is felt, and glimpses of the magnificent whole flash upon the mind. And how infinitely superior, both in intensity and in dignity, is the mutual feeling of teacher and taught! Both parties meet, possessed with an awful sense of their respective responsibilities. Both have had most precious talents confided to them, and been brought together to employ them in the presence of God. The one has to deal forth from a store of wisdom, with which the Holy Spirit has entrusted him, and must be careful to deal freely and faithfully: the other has to receive from God's steward, and must look heedfully, that none fall to the ground in careless waste. If community of peril produce a friendship of sympathy between men, how much more here, in the most awful of perils! How vivid is the charity awakened by the deep sense of their mutual responsible relations: how kindly the consideration with which they survey each other, placed upon this giddy pinnacle of trial! Such intercourse nourishes and increases all good affection, and withdrawing all intervening earthly passions, brings two spirits together in Christ's name. A mutual recognition takes place, and the spiritual beauty discerned in each augments that pure love which had begun in the presence, and through the means of the lover of mankind, which is a foretaste of those bonds of spirit, which shall unite the society of the new Jerusalem. Daily, as the one feeds, and the other is fed, this feeling is fed likewise, and hal-

lows an emulation of duty and love. Well were such teachers denominated Fathers¹, where one could feel as if he had imparted a portion of his own mind, and rejoiced to see it flourishing in his pupil; and the other, as if he had received it, and endeavoured to render it worthy of its original. What delightful prospects, too, ever expand, to cheer the dreariness of his toil, as the teacher sees in his pupils the elements of future distinction! How must Clement have exulted, as he witnessed the dilating proportions of Origen's gigantic mind, and contemplated, with that freedom from jealousy which the Baptist had exemplified to him, the service which it would hereafter perform for the Church of which he himself was a Presbyter²!

(A.D. 202.) But his honourable and peaceful employment was doomed to meet with a painful interruption. In the tenth year of his reign, Severus raged in a furious persecution against the Church. Upon Alexandria it fell peculiarly heavy, and its prisons were crowded with martyrs, who were sent thither from Egypt and the Thebaid, as to the most conspicuous theatre for the spectacle of their sufferings³. Among them was Leonidas, the father of Origen, whom he thus left an orphan at the age of seventeen⁴. As a presbyter, but still more perhaps as master of an institution which had the express object of heathen conversion, Clement would be exposed to imminent danger. He would remain at

¹ Euseb. E. H. vi. 14.

² Pæd. i. 37. Euseb. E. H. vi. 11.

³ Euseb. E. H. vi. 1.

⁴ Ibid. 2.

his post manfully, as long as his service could assist or example encourage. But he had no fanatical notions upon martyrdom, like his contemporary Tertullian, and maintained that the man who offered himself at the tribunal, sinned against God as a suicide: and in like manner, he who by not declining persecution rashly offered himself to be taken. Such a man, as far as in him lies, is one, he says, who is an accomplice in the wickedness of his persecutor¹. When, therefore, the danger approached so near that it would be a tempting of God's providence to stay, he quitted Alexandria. It must have been with a heavy heart that he left a home endeared by so pleasing and honourable a service,—gave up his peaceful employment, his precious leisure,—and, above all, parted with friends and companions, whom he may never meet more; some of whom he may have saluted in prison with an eternal farewell, or even seen yielding with their blood the last testimony of the faith in Christ. Whether he found a resting-place with his friend and pupil Alexander, or whether he retired to some of the obscure spots towards the desert, as afterwards did the great Dionysius, or to whatever other quarter he went, we know not². But if he carried a good conscience with him, he could not fail to reap much spiritual improvement from this retirement. Being separated from his studies, and continual occupation, he had leisure for calm and deep reflection. The student's attention is apt to be too little directed

¹ Strom. vi. 79.

² In fact his flight is not matter of narrative, but of inference, from Euseb. E. H. vi. 3. 6.

upon himself. His mind is called away far from home, and so continually, that she is often less acquainted with it than with other mansions. The very innocence of his employment renders him too careless of what should be going on within, and he is like the person who having a large acquaintance with men of agreeable manners, wide information, and good character, spends all his time among them, without looking to his domestic concerns. And the consequence is likely to be the same—a home in derangement and confusion. Let those companions be the most pious of men, the result will not be otherwise; and let the student's occupation be sacred literature itself, he will not escape the evil effects of too exclusively outward attention. Indeed it may be questioned whether the reading of what are called good books, may not often be carried too far,—whether it may not hinder reflection, promote self-ignorance, flatter with the name of a good work, and terminate in mere profession and spiritual pride. All the books in the world will not let us into the knowledge of our hearts, unless we take them there ourselves by meditation. They are like the guide-books of a town, which must be read on the spot. And it is only through knowing ourselves that we can know God. Perhaps Clement now found that furnished as he was with all other knowledge, yet that here he was but inadequately supplied. When the want of books forced him upon self-notice, then he might have acknowledged the goodness of God, in breaking his deceitful calm by the rudeness of this trial.

On his return, he had the satisfaction of finding that his absence had been well supplied by the

activity of his pupil Origen, who now became the partner of his labours. He had felt the delight of becoming an assistant to his former instructor, and he now experienced its correlative in Origen's association with him. It was the proud satisfaction which a father feels in the help of a dutiful and intelligent son, but ennobled by many glorious considerations,—above all, by the consciousness of building up, not the fortunes of an earthly family, but the eternal welfare of the family of God. This sight of master and pupil joined in one labour with one mind, which had become one by the communion both of knowledge and of love, which was growing up in their own bosoms, must have been full of delightful encouragement to the youth under their care. How was toil sweetened—how reasonable was its endurance—when it produced such fruit as they beheld! Among them was a youth destined himself to a similar association, and Heraclâs perhaps owed to this illustrious example much spurring in that race of which the earthly goal was the chair of St. Mark¹. Clement found the little flock, which he had left scattered in the dismay of persecution, not only gathered again into one fold, but increased by large numbers through the unsparing exertions of his late pupil, who had brought them in at the imminent peril of his life, and had shown himself a true servant of Him who laid down his life for his sheep². Perhaps, however justifiable his flight had been, Clement felt not quite easy under this contrast which Origen's conduct exhibited. He might feel in it a

¹ Euseb. E. H. vi. 15. 29.

² Ibid. 3.

rebuke, notwithstanding the obvious difference of their situations, Origen having been too obscure for much peril at the moment that he himself was set upon that very pinnacle at which persecution would aim. Perhaps too, he found the energetic and capacious mind of Origen to be one that ought not to be kept down in the second place, and felt that he was in the way of a better man. Few reflections are less tolerable to a lowly and upright mind than this. His late retirement also may have given him a taste of the enjoyment of his own trains of thought, and disgusted him somewhat with the unvarying round his mind had been forced to run, and the low level of the ground of its course, in the oral instruction of his juniors. He must also, when thrown as he had been by solitude upon his own mental resources, have become conscious of the riches of his own mind, and thus would grow desirous of pouring them forth in a far wider and deeper stream than his catechetical lectures would allow. Many subjects too might have suggested themselves during his secession, which he desired the opportunity of leisure to work out. And in short, he might have felt that unconquerable disgust which the sense of mental confinement so often produces in a veteran teacher. However it might have been, he does not appear to have persisted long in the resumption of his catechetical duties; and on his vacating the chair, Origen was appointed sole successor by the authority of Bishop Demetrius¹.

¹ Neither Clement's return nor his resignation are expressly mentioned, but they seem implied by Eusebius in E. H. vi. 3., coupled with the fact that Origen was his successor.

(A.D. 211.) He was not likely to remain stationary at Alexandria long after he had obtained his liberty, and we are now carried in his company to Cappadocia, where his friend and former pupil, Alexander, was bishop. Here he had an opportunity of showing that his former retreat from persecution had not been the effect of fear,—that he was not the mere secluded scholar, or unpractical divine,—and that he could not only teach what he had read, but also could practise what he had taught. His friend was thrown into prison, now the second time, for Christ his Master's sake. The arrival of Clement seemed a merciful purpose of Providence, for he so exerted himself in his pastoral office of presbyter—comforting and confirming the desolate Church—that he brought it increase in despite of the obstacles of a time of persecution. Impressed with a deep sense of his services, Alexander, writing from his prison, sent him on the honourable commission of presenting a letter of congratulation to the Church of Antioch, on the election of its new bishop Asclepiades. He was not unknown by name to the members of that Church, and probably he had made personal acquaintance with some during his former sojourn in Syria. It must have been a delightful renewal of his old connexion, when he could present such a testimonial as his friend had sent. This part of his letter ran as follows :—“ This letter I have sent to you, my sirs and brethren, through Clement the blessed presbyter, a man of tried worth, whom you too know, and will recognize. Arriving here by the providential disposal of our Master, he hath not only confirmed, but also given increase to the Church

of the Lord¹." This is no mean praise from a man whose name was honoured throughout the whole Church, for the manful fight which he had already fought for the faith, and who was destined to finish it with the crown of martyrdom on his head. The world allows the talent of Clement as a writer; but the still more valuable, though less showy, part of his character would have been lost to us, but for the preservation of this precious fragment. So fortuitous sometimes appears the reputation of men with posterity! A mere scrap, preserved perhaps for quite a different purpose, displays a virtue or exposes a defect, which otherwise would have been buried in oblivion.

We leave Clement in such company as we could wish to leave such a man. We leave him in the enjoyment of the warm recommendation of a future martyr, and of the hospitality and brotherly love of the earliest Gentile Church, where he would be the guest of a bishop, who had himself testified to the faith under persecution². There remains but to transcribe the epitaph, so to call it, which the same Alexander in a letter wrote to his fellow-pupil, Origen:—"For we know for Fathers those blessed men who have gone before us, with whom after a little we shall be: Pantænus (I mean) the truly blessed and master, and the holy Clement, who was my master and benefactor³."

Having lost all further notice of him, we will now proceed to the consideration of his works, the abundance of which is singularly opposed to the scantiness

¹ Euseb. E. H. vi. 11.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid. 14.

of his biography, and their importance to the commonplace of the few facts which we have been able to glean. They form an epoch in ecclesiastical literature, as being the earliest writings extant of a school whose influence on the Church, whether for good or for bad, was long and deep—and require, therefore, more than usual strictness of examination. Nor can we put the reader properly in possession of their character, without the introduction of some preliminary matter.

I. We have mentioned that the Alexandrine Jew was brought within the charmed ring of philosophy. He never returned to his Scriptures with the same eyes. All things appeared in a different light. The eclectic spirit which he had imbibed was in the very opposite extreme to that frivolous and narrow-minded adherence to the letter, on which the rest of his countrymen prided themselves, and was little disposed to be baulked at any literal difficulties which stood in the way of his more enlightened notions. Of course the minuteness of his law would appear slavishly unreasonable,—parts of the sacred history, especially as regarding the conduct of such men as Abraham and the Patriarchs, would present difficulties to himself, and scandal to the Greek,—human parts and passions were literally ascribed to the Deity, and throughout the letter treated him as a child, which he was very unwilling to think himself. Philosophy had opened his eyes to the knowledge of good and evil, and he saw that he was naked, and went and hid himself in the shades of allegory. It is true that his heathen brethren of the beard and cloak had preceded him in this device of

making religion bow to philosophy ; and even before Plato had arisen, Metrodorus had reduced the *Iliad*, with all its gods and men, to a tissue of allegory¹. But the Jew had a more plausible pretence from the typical and prophetic portions of Scripture, and its positive denial of parts and passions in the Supreme Being. Why not then rescue the remainder of so large a part of Scripture from the bonds of the irrational letter ? The writings of Philo are a memorable monument of the completeness with which he executed this work. There we find the letter not only disregarded, but actually despised. It is an inert mass, which is worth nothing, until it shall have been sublimated. It is only then that it can act internally. And it is to be feared its effects on the mind were then but too analogous in perniciousness to that of some such sublimates on the intestines. Thus the literal sense is sometimes asserted to be fabulous² ; sometimes, impossible³ ; sometimes, improbable⁴ ; sometimes, unworthy of God⁵. A distinctly-related fact is evaporated into a moral allegory ; a positive precept becomes an instructive figure ; persons merely represent attributes ; places denote moral circumstances⁶. Proceeding upon such grounds, many contemplative mystics, understanding the express rules of the law only as symbols of intelligible things, neglected some, and clung most straitly to others,—and even the Sabbath, and

¹ Tatian, c. Græcos. 21. Later allegorists are mentioned by Porphyry, as being imitated by Origen, in Euseb. E. H. vi. 19.

² Leg. Alleg. ii. 7.

³ Ibid. iii. 2. and 84.

⁴ Quod det. potior. 25.

⁵ De Somniis. 16.

⁶ See almost every page of Philo.

Passover, and Circumcision were abandoned¹. This was paying a dear price for the boasted removal of the objection of anthropomorphism²; the authority of the word of God was made a mere tool to the whimsical fancies, if not to the designing corruption, of man, and the philosophical Jew could deal with it as he pleased³. With such a comment Jewish Scripture came into the hands of the philosophers of the Alexandrine Church, who found an additional pretext for such treatment of the text in the fact of the typical character of the law being distinctly asserted by the Gospel. According to Clement, almost all the volume of the law and the prophets is allegorical, and much in the Gospel too⁴. The object of which disposition was, that we might be inquisitive after truth, and ever awake to the discovery of the sense of the words of salvation,—and moreover, that the vulgar might not take hurt by wresting the expressions of the Holy Spirit. The hidden sense of these is reserved for the understanding of the elect only, who have advanced from faith to knowledge⁵, and are as the priests who were admitted within the veil⁶. It is impossible to suppress a smile at all this grand parade, when we call to mind some of the very numerous instances which he gives of this hidden sense. In most cases they are the most puerile con-

¹ De Migr. Abr. 16.

² De Poster. Cain. i. Clem. Alex. Strom. v. 69.

³ See the slender hedge set up by Philo, in the last quoted passage but one.

⁴ Strom. v. 32. vi. 126. De div. serv. 5. &c. and see examples every where.

⁵ Ibid. v. 55. vi. 126.

⁶ Ibid. v. 19.

ceits of cold (I had almost said heartless) fancy ; and so far from requiring for its investigation the solemn preparation of all divestment of passion, and of the gift of spiritual knowledge, such a sense might have occurred to the most careless, and we may certainly subscribe most heartily (although not according to his meaning) to his remark, that such knowledge should not be imparted to the profane, lest it prove to them a stumblingblock¹. Whatever may have been the result in his days, there could be no doubt in ours, were Scripture to come forth with such a comment. The frivolous would laugh, the serious would be shocked. But, to say nothing of the practice, the mischief of such a principle is extensive. The sense of Scripture is unsettled—reverence for the text is diminished—the authority of its precepts is reduced from divine to human, depending, as their sense does, upon the arbitrary interpretation of man, and subjected to the sport of fancy², which is shortly supplanted by the interest of ambition. The result is written in deep characters on the pages of the history of the Church.

II. From these two senses of Scripture, we are led to the two classes of its hearers. The same division had been made among the hearers of the Greek philosophers, both as to matter and to person³. And Plato's rich metaphorical language gave vogue to a phraseology, which, derived as it is from the most sacred recesses of Paganism, has a singular ap-

¹ Strom. v. 55.

² He sometimes assigns several mystic meanings to one passage. See Strom. iii. § 8. v. 54, &c.

³ Strom. v. 59, 60.

pearance in the pages of Christian philosophy, continually occurring as it does in the works of Clement. Candidates for initiation into the mysteries underwent a course of purification, by abstinence from all bodily defilement for a certain period, and completed it in the lesser mysteries. Afterwards, they were admitted into the greater mysteries, and became spectators of the secret rites. To this initiated spectator Plato likened the true philosopher, who, having purged himself from all his passions, and overcome the attractions, and removed the clogs of sense, with his understanding thus pure and bare, as it were, contemplates the world of ideas, and is in a manner admitted to a sight of the divinity¹. Through such a process, which was one of holiness accompanied with understanding, he approximated continually to the divine likeness, which he was to attain as far as is possible for man to do². To this model Clement adapts the course and character of his Gnostic, or perfect Christian, and in this language he speaks. Beginning with the common and fundamental faith, which is such as that of the sick, to whom Christ said, "Thy faith hath saved thee," his Gnostic goes on to that, which having been built up and perfected by practice of the word, is such as that of the Apostles, who had the promise of removing mountains³. From this the increase is to knowledge, through grace, to such as prove worthy of instruction, and from this again the increase is to love. So that faith

¹ Plato's *Phædrus*, 64. See it quoted too in *Strom.* v. 139. See too *Strom.* v. 68. Compare *Strom.* iv. 154.

² Plato *Rep.* x. § 11. *Theæt.* § 84, &c.

³ *Strom.* v. 2.

and love are the beginning and end. By the last the man is perfected, and made a friend and son of God¹. In proceeding through this course, however, he goes far beyond the purification required by the heathen philosopher : he is not content with mere abstinence from evil, which they deemed perfection, but beyond this, his righteousness advances to active well-doing, and his perfection abides in an unchangeable habit of well-doing, according to the divine likeness². Thus this resemblance mainly consists in freedom from passion and wants, and in virtue³, and embraces two chief points of the Gnostic character, which are the performance of the commandments, and the making of good men. The third, however, is the principal, and combined with the rest, perfect his character. This is divine contemplation⁴. By pure abiding in this, the Gnostic, partaking of the quality of holiness more and more nearly, is put into a habit of passionless sameness, so as no longer to have knowledge, but to be knowledge⁵. And by turning aside from things of sense, and stripping off as it were his material coat, with his understanding thus bare, he has a sight of the divinity⁶, that is, an apprehension of the divine power and essence⁷. For such contemplation is reserved the hidden sense of Scripture⁸. This is not the place for drawing at length this character, which is detailed in piecemeal through his

¹ Strom. vii. 55. 68.

² Ibid. vi. 60.

³ Ibid. iv. 149.

⁴ Ibid. ii. 46.

⁵ Ibid. iv. 40.

⁶ Ibid. v. 68.

⁷ Ibid. 67. This included Metaphysics. Ibid. i. 176.

⁸ Pædog. i. 2. 8. Strom. v. 65. vi. 116. *Ἐκρηπτική θεωρία* is his term for this contemplation of mysteries.

great work¹, but the consideration of it gives rise to many serious reflections. Clement thus divides Christians into two great classes, to one of which, very small and select, he confines the right understanding of Scripture. The error of such a principle is evident. The qualities demanded for his Gnostic never have been and never will be concentrated in one man, and therefore either none can properly understand Scripture, or such as pretend to it must pretend also to very much more excellence, both moral and intellectual, than they possess. Spiritual pride and hypocrisy must be their character, and indeed ever has been the character of such exclusive claimants. If he had said that the illustration of the meaning of the text required the distribution of such qualities through the body of its interpreters, and not all in any one individual, he would have said no more than what every man of sound judgment maintains. But this would not suit with his doctrine of a hidden sense, which is as fatal as the most impudently fanatical ever broached, to common sense, to sound learning, and to right interpretation. The heretics, whom he abuses for their literal understanding of the text, were in the safer extreme².

III. The mixture of the heathen philosophy with the truths of the Gospel was strongly objected to Clement by some of his contemporaries. They accounted it an invention for the destruction of man³, and

¹ The reader may see it put together in the Bishop of Lincoln's Account of the Writings of Clement.

² Strom. vii. 97.

³ Ibid. i. 18. vi. 99.

ascribed its origin to the devil¹. He, however, repeatedly maintains its divine origin², although not very consistent in the particulars, and assigns to it the office of preparing the Gentiles for the Gospel, being to them what the Law was to the Jews³, instructing as a *Pædagogus* for Christ⁴, and supplying justification in the same way as the Law did to its observers⁵, namely, the justification in Christ⁶. The heathen, therefore, who before Christ's coming had lived up to this light, had the Gospel preached to them in Hades, on the same principle as the Jews had⁷, and to those who lived after, it was a similar preparation. In fact, it had the nature of a covenant, co-ordinate with that of the Jews, and God correspondingly sent them prophets in the Sibyll, Hystaspes and others⁸. Nor had its use ceased, though its necessity had. It supplied the place of a hedge to the vineyard, being useful in defence against heretical sophistry, and being to the Gospel as the cake in the desert to the bread which is the staff of life⁹. These are bold words, and on the mere face of them give great scandal to the reader. When, however, we come to divest them of all their parade, their meaning is innocent enough. By philosophy Clement does not understand the doctrines of any particular school, Stoic, Epicurean, Academic, or Peripatetic; but the whole body of truth contained in disjointed limbs

¹ Strom. i. 18. 44. 80.

² Ibid. v. 10. vii. 6.

³ Ibid. i. 28. 80. vii. 20.

⁴ Ibid. i. 28.

⁵ Ibid. and 99.

⁶ Ibid. 38. and v. 88.

⁷ Ibid. ii. 44. vi. 46.

⁸ Ibid. vi. 42, 43.

⁹ Ibid. i. 100. vi. 81.

among the several sects, and which, being thus brought together, he denominates the Eclectic¹. Turned, therefore, into plain language, his main assertions amount but to this: that the Gentiles had the light of nature, for which they were responsible, and which must be presumed upon, as a foundation, in imparting the Gospel. This is no other than the doctrine and practice of St. Paul himself². It were, however, to be wished, that he had not pressed into the service of the Gospel terms derived from the human pride of philosophy. Yet even for these, perhaps, when we come to consider the design of the works wherein they are found, we shall see excuse, if not just reason.

We are now prepared for a brief review of his extant works. These, as left entire, are three, which are intimately connected by unity of design³. The aim of the first, which is termed the *Protreptic* or hortatory address, is to invite the heathen in, by showing the shocking folly and iniquity of heathenism, by asserting the unity of God out of the mouths of their own philosophers and poets, and by showing the beauty and wisdom of the Gospel, and God's exceeding mercy in its dispensation. He concludes with a most eloquent exhortation to accept the invitation of Christ, and proves himself an animated and stirring preacher, as well as a deeply-read scholar. The second supposes the invitation accepted, and

¹ Strom. i. 37. 57. vi. 55. But the Platonic in metaphysics and Stoic in morals were predominant.

² Rom. i. 19—21. ii. 14, 15. Acts xvii. 22, &c.

³ *Pædog.* i. 1, 2. iii. 87. The *Stromatics* seem, from i. 139, 140, 144. to have been written in the reign of Severus.

gives the rules of Christian practice. It is termed the *Pædagogus*, since Christ, who in the former work performed the part of exhorter, here re-appears under the character of private tutor to the young convert, and is supposed to deliver his precepts at home, and on the road, as he is conducting him to his masters¹. The first book is dedicated to showing the character of the *Pædagogus*, and the nature of the relations between him and his pupils. The second and third take up the main subject of instruction, and contain rules for the conduct of life, extending to the most minute directions upon diet and dress. The third work supposes the boy arrived in school, where Christ assumes now the character of the master². Here the staple of instruction is the mystical interpretation of Scripture, and what relates to Gnostic knowledge³, to which all previous had been but a preparation. It is impossible to give within any suitable compass in this volume an abstract of the plan of a work, which its very title, *Stromateis*, or, tapestry-work, declares to be so designedly miscellaneous⁴, and which he likens to a meadow, wherein the flowers grow, not arranged according to their kind, but promiscuously⁵. It contains, he says, his recollections of what he had received from his teachers⁶, not, however, directly disclosing the truth, lest he should put a sword into the hands of children⁷, but mixing it with the doctrines of philosophy, like gold amidst sand⁸, or disguising it, like the kernel

¹ *Pæd.* i. 12. iii. 87.² *Ibid.* and 97. 101.³ *Ibid.* and *Strom.* vi. 1.⁴ *Strom.* iv. 4.⁵ *Ibid.* vi. 2.⁶ *Ibid.* i. 11.⁷ *Ibid.* 14.⁸ *Ibid.* iv. 4.

under the shell¹. Thus he will be understood by all such as are fit for knowledge, to whose memory his observations will be as sparks to light it up again, or as pictures which recal the original². Such a variety will at the same time gratify various tastes, allure them to the truth, and tempt them to toil in its search³. The main body of the work, however, is taken up in showing the superior antiquity of the Christian philosophy, by proving how the Greeks borrowed from the Jews, in refuting heresies, and in delineating the character of the Gnostic. It is indeed miscellaneous, and by such casual associations does he imperceptibly slide from one topic to another, that the reader must keep his attention quite alive, if he wish to know where he is. He truly finds himself in that wild wood to which its author compares the work⁴, and if he mean to find his way on a future occasion, he must mark trees, and lay down twigs, like those who mean to return on their steps through an American forest. It abounds with quotations, and is thus, like the work of Athenæus, a storehouse of fragments of lost works, of which, even thus imperfectly represented, the scholar is thankful to have had the glimpse. But their selection often presents a most singular, and to such as will not enter into his design, offensive appearance. Verses of Scripture are mixed up with scraps of profane writing, and Pindar and Æschylus, Heraclitus and St. Paul, are quoted in the same breath⁵. Were

¹ Strom. i. 18.² Ibid. vi. 2. i. 14.³ Ibid. i. 17. vii. iii. &c.⁴ Ibid.⁵ Ibid. iv. 50.; so too *ibid.* 53. 64, 65. 174.

he less excusable, we could not but applaud his preservation of such interesting extracts as those which declare the heathen's notions of the Deity. What a loud cry is sent forth from their beautiful poetry and sublime expressions, testifying to us how well they understood His eternal power and Godhead, and could celebrate His glory¹.

The plan pursued in these works of disguising Christianity under a philosophical dress should never be lost sight of by the reader, who should remember that Clement best knew how to adapt himself to the wants of his generation². He wished, for instance, to display the Christian character to the heathen under such garb as he would not take offence at, and the Christian reader was expected to see through this, and recognise a deeper and more holy sense. For example, the strong expression, "God conversing in the flesh³," applied to the Gnostic, was at once suited to the Stoic's apprehension⁴, and would imply to the Christian the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The terms Priest and King⁵ were in both vocabularies, as belonging to the virtuous and holy man. The Platonic phrase of resemblance to God had a fuller and more stirring meaning for the Christian⁶; and the expressions which this philosophy applied to the contemplation of the ideal world reminded him of the grand spectacle which revelation had unveiled to his mind. In fact, to the Christian of that day, when these terms were familiar, it must

¹ See Strom. v. 116. 120. 122, &c.

² See Strom. i. 16.

³ Strom. vii. 101. cf. ib. 29.

⁴ Diogen. Laert. vii. 119.

⁵ Strom. vii. 36. Rev. i. 6. Diog. Laert. ib.

⁶ Ephes. v. 1. 1 Pet. iii. 13, &c.

have been most affecting to see the divine wisdom thus in one view, as it were, with human ; to find the latter but shadowy, unsubstantial words, which had no real sense, except when, by a lucky chance, they coincided with such as represented divine truth : and then the poverty of philosophy and the riches of the Gospel were seen in all their contrast. The heathen reader, too, was led by the tenor of the text to see something in them which he had never seen before, to espy a deeper and more appropriate meaning, and was gradually and unconsciously attracted towards the truth. Hence also the character of the Gnostic exhibits itself in two lights, according to the position from which it is viewed, like those faces which are so expressed as to present a different character from different points. Seen from one, it has the features of a virtuous philosopher, though of a more unearthly mould than mere human conception could frame : from the other, it assumes the likeness of the servant of Christ, though not, it must be confessed, in all that sweetness and lowliness which are among the sublimest parts of his character. This defect is inherent in the very plan of attempting to describe the perfect Christian in philosophical phraseology, and of keeping out of obvious sight, as he purposely did, the essential doctrines of the Gospel. Christ's atonement, with its consequences, not being distinctly laid down as the foundation, the character, however beautiful, is but the corpse of the Christian character. It ought to be warm with the blood of Christ, which should be seen giving colour to the face and lips, and empurpling the course of

the veins. It would not have had full animation, had he even put together the excellencies of the Christian from the language of Scripture itself. The sinfulness and weakness of man would thus be lost sight of, and there would be wanting that abasement which gives the highest exaltation. How different is this character as imprest on our minds in reading the pages of Scripture itself! There deeds of darkness, lapses of infirmity, are held up to the saints to warn them away; as well as deeds of light, and perseverance in well-doing, to cheer them on. Rebuke and condemnation are mingled with encouragement and commendation, the flesh is still supposed weak, though the spirit be taken for willing, the degraded state of man is always pre-supposed to his exalted, and his natural weakness to the strength of the grace of God obtained by the blood of Christ. Such a model, therefore, would have been unreal. We must not direct our view exclusively on a model of perfection, for we have things to shun, as well as to imitate. The medical instructor would give most useless, and even false information to his pupils, who should exhibit to them only models of perfect health and symmetry, and not show specimens of disease and deformity. The perfect human form exists perhaps but in statues, and then it pleases, but it does not instruct. And so the perfect human character exists but in description, and there it interests more than it edifies. Much more then is the character drawn by Clement liable to these objections. Ethical writers have made the same attempt again and again,—and the

reader, if he has not admired with the vanity of the pride of human virtue, has turned away from it with the disgust of incredulity.

To speak generally of the works of Clement, we must carefully bear in mind their missionary cast,—and, instead of complaining of their embodying so much heathen learning, we might, with far better reason, take in all lowliness an useful hint towards the efficiency of the attempts now so widely and vigorously made to convert those heathen nations which have a literature of their own. This has been found, as might have been expected, a far more difficult task than the conversion of the ruder tribes; and the very inadequate success ought to make us suspect that we have not taken the right road. Might not, then, the Gospel be introduced to the Hindoos much in the same way as it was to the Greeks, by taking a position upon the ground of their own mythology and philosophy — applying them, or refuting them, as best suits the purpose—and might not the votaries of Vishnu and Chrishna, or the followers of Menou, be disabused of their errors, and allured to the truth, by much the same means as the worshippers of Apollo and Jupiter, and the scholars of the Porch or Academy? The very different rate of the progress of the Gospel among the heathen in Clement's days and ours, seems loudly to signify to us that we have not yet found the right road to conversion. But while we thus assent to the propriety of the philosophical form of Clement's works, we cannot but find fault with the imprudent length to which he often pushes his argument. Who, for instance, can refrain a smile of

ridicule when among his examples of the Greeks borrowing from the Jews, he adduces their generalship, and says that Miltiades borrowed from Moses the tactics of Marathon¹? He shares in the uncritical spirit which has been remarked in his predecessors. He sometimes forms a most fantastic connection between two independent passages of Scripture, through the means of some unimportant word²; and the usage of the same commonplace in expression or sentiment by two heathen authors, is sufficient in his opinion to establish a charge of plagiarism against one of them³. As to his style, he distinctly disclaims all ambitious display⁴. If so, and surely we should take him at his word, he must have practised long and laboriously to compose as he does. No little effort must have been made to supply himself with so very copious a store of language. His words and phrases are of the very best mould, though sometimes too affectedly drawn from antiquated sources. But who will peculiarly blame this in an Alexandrian? He is, however, deeply guilty of that faulty construction of Greek, which is so prevalent in authors of his late date. I mean that artificial inversion of the plain and natural order of the words, which they carry to such an extreme, that it is often difficult to obtain the meaning without a rapid glance which shall connect the disjointed members; and frequently the same sentence

¹ Strom. i. 162.

² Ib. v. 54, 55.

³ See the whole second chapter of Strom. vi. which is an interesting piece of ancient criticism, but not much to the credit of its judgment.

⁴ Strom. i. 11. ii. 3. vii. 111. &c.

must be read twice over,—once, to see how the words lie,—a second time, to put them together. Perhaps some traces of this decline of the language from its purity are discernible so early as to be found in the pages of Demosthenes, and the wide prevalence of the Latin (the most contorted of all languages) under Roman dominion, would increase this tendency. Amid such ruggedness, how delightfully do we repose on the easy flow and clear construction of the passages of classical Greek, which are quoted so abundantly in his works! He is, indeed, unsparing in the display of his prodigious stores of antiquarian lore. He introduces them, whether for right or wrong, on every occasion,—and cannot prescribe upon minute points in the articles of diet, drink, and dress, without the pedantry of a learned list of the various kinds of dainties¹, wines², cups and furniture³, shoes⁴, gems⁵, and bracelets⁶, many, if not most, of which were strange perhaps to the majority of his readers, and survived but in the mention of ancient authors. But this affectation of the scholar is counterbalanced by high qualities of the preacher,—and when occasion calls, he can put forth passages of astonishing power, brilliancy, and beauty. Such a strain he breathes in the earlier chapters of the seventh book of his *Stromateis*, in the latter of his *Protreptic*, and also in his beautiful little treatise on the *Salvation of the Rich Man*, where too may be seen the affecting story of the *Apostle John and the Robber*.

The plan of his works would not lead us to expect

¹ *Pæd.* ii. 3.

² *Ib.* 30.

³ *Ib.* 35.

⁴ *Ib.* 116.

⁵ *Ib.* 118.

⁶ *Ib.* 123.

any full notice of Christian doctrine. Yet this omission has been gravely objected to him. He best knew, we may presume, the tempers and prejudices which he was addressing, and how much the heathen could endure to hear of the Gospel, without repugnance. Nor will a knowledge of human nature fail to confirm what was with him, and others who followed the same plan, the joint result of knowledge and experience. The heathen must not be startled into an inflexible attitude of belief or disbelief (of which two the latter is incomparably the most common) by the sudden announcement of the doctrine of the atonement and its more immediate concomitants. Because its exhibition is so present to their feelings, while its application is so remote from their understandings, its abrupt appeal rouses the passions without leaving an interval for reflection, and is answered by the mockery of ridicule or indignation. The ball which is thrown violently from a height against the ground is immediately reflected from it. But sent gently from the hand, which is slightly raised, rolls along it. So the Gospel will take its surer hold on their minds by first preaching the doctrines most level with their comprehension. The awful scene, therefore, of Christ crucified was not all at once unveiled ; but first, as it were, the heathen attendants were shown in the form of natural religion and morality, and involved at the same time some very elementary doctrine as that crowd hid amongst them the foot of the cross. Then the curtain still further updrawn, showed the feet of the Saviour in some higher doctrine ; then the pierced side ; then the outspread and pierced

hands : and it was not until gradually accustomed to the sight, that the eye was allowed to take in the whole form, and gaze on the agonized face, the crown of thorns, and the inscription " This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." How many converts were made, and how many were not deterred, by the actual spectacle of the crucifixion ? So far from its gaining believers to the cause, it cast dismay and despair amongst his followers ; and long preparation, through miraculous gifts, was necessary to introduce the preaching of it. How much longer preparation then of unaided human means ! The work of the missionary were easy indeed, were the preaching of the word of God merely as a rod put into his hands, whereby to divide at once the elect from the non-elect of God's grace ; and we should have no right to demand from him either knowledge, or ability, or discretion, or perseverance. As long, however, as the unconverted human mind is the same, he must adapt the shape of his preaching to the various forms and sizes of the various minds around him : and in this, as in other cases, follow the example of the great Missionary, " who became all things to all men, that he might by all means save some ¹."

It is remarkable, however, that, notwithstanding this avowed withdrawal of the more peculiar doctrines of the Gospel, there is not one which is not only implied, but openly expressed, although with due caution. Even the atonement itself is mentioned, although but briefly and by the way ². It passes

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 22.

² Strom. iv. 43. 77. vi. 70, &c. Pæd. i. 97. iii. 85.

as a flash before the eyes, so that the heathen had no time to gaze on it. The Incarnation is similarly mentioned, as also his priestly mediation¹. He is more explicit on the Godhead and office of the Son, which are the subject of some very splendid passages². In points connected with the quinquarticular controversy, he asserts regeneration in baptism³, the co-operation of grace with man's endeavours⁴, election through God's foreknowledge⁵, freedom of the will⁶, justification through faith⁷, and the necessity of works to a real faith⁸. As to other questions, the doctrine of the intermediate state is explicitly maintained by him, as by his predecessors⁹, and the ministry of angels much more distinctly announced, one of which he says is appointed to the ward and aid of every city and country¹⁰. He appeals to Scripture as the grand arbiter in controversy, maintaining, however, an apostolic tradition, which was in harmony with it¹¹. He also discloses by the way, several rites and customs of the Church of his day, such as the fasts on Wednesday and Friday¹², the

¹ Strom. vii. 6, 7, &c. Pæd. i. 74, and Strom. ii. 134. vii. 45.

² Strom. vii. 5, 7. Protrep. 110, &c. We meet the term Trinity in v. 104.

³ Pæd. i. 26. 98. 118.

⁴ Strom. vii. 48. Div. Serv. 21.

⁵ Strom. ii. 26. vii. 37. 44. Pæd. i. 59.

⁶ Strom. ii. 12. 26. iii. 41, &c.

⁷ Strom. ii. 12.

⁸ Strom. vi. 108.

⁹ Strom. ii. 44. vii. 46. See Justin. Mart. Dial. 5. Irenæus, v. 5. (Ed. Grabe.)

¹⁰ Strom. vi. 157. 161. vii. 5, 6. 9. 81. 98. See Athenagoras, c. 24. D.

¹¹ Strom. vii. 94, 95. 97. 103, 104, 105.

¹² Strom. vii. 75.

hours of prayer: namely—nine, twelve, and three o'clock¹; stating, moreover, that in offering it, they turned towards the east², and put it up by night as well as by day³; that they read Scripture before meals, and sang psalms and hymns during meal-time and before bed-time⁴.

The works of the earliest author of a celebrated school seemed to deserve to be considered at the utmost length to which the nature and extent of this volume would allow. They are full of interest too from several other causes, especially as they give us an insight into the peculiar passage through which the Gospel won its way to the heads and hearts of the educated classes, and show how the baggage of routed philosophy was rifled by its victorious champions. They disclose to us also the painful truth that as the waters of life rose up to the level of the higher and more learned ranks, they became turbid from the muddiness of the soil, and corruption of manners was no longer confined to the followers of heretical doctrine⁵. Leading characters now become, like trees in the midst of a flood, more prominent, but not more pure, and ecclesiastical biography begins to assume greater variety and compass. But its variety is gained at the expense of simplicity, and its compass takes in what had formerly lain far beyond its pale, as hateful and un-

¹ Strom. vii. 40. 80.

² Strom. vii. 43.

³ Strom. vii. 49. Pæd. ii. 79.

⁴ Strom. vii. 49. Pæd. ii. 43, 44.

⁵ See Clement's complaints in Pæd. iii. 80, 81. Indeed the very precepts of this work imply a sad falling off from former simplicity.

clean. The next character will show us how the affectionate tone of admonition was exchanged for the notes of sour reprehension ; how the teacher of doctrine had become a fierce controversialist, and the preacher of morals, a biting satirist. In Clement we bid a long farewell to the calm unruffled spirit of Christian scholarship.

TERTULLIAN.

Singular parallel of the fortunes of Rome and Carthage—Account of Tertullian's probable state before conversion—Of his probable feelings after it—Character of his Apology—His visit to Rome, quarrel with the Clergy there—Account of the heresy of Montanus—Points in Tertullian's character which combined with events to make him adopt it—His violent abuse of the Church—His Treatise on Public Shows—Against female dress—His controversies—Evils of sectarianism—Character of the Ascetic—Character of the Latin language—His style—His defects and merits—Points of doctrine found in his writings—Points of discipline—Abuse of prophecy.

IN one point of view the histories of Rome and Carthage present a very striking parallel. In both of them the loss of temporal glory was compensated by the gain of spiritual splendour, and as they came into rivalry under the first condition, so did they also under the second. Yet in each, their prosperity was built upon a different ground. If, in one, it had been raised on military power—in the other, on commercial; so now in the one it was an influence founded on the outward accidents of the world—in the other, on the inward possession of mental supe-

riority. But although ecclesiastical Carthage found no destroyer in ecclesiastical Rome, yet was her glorious existence but short-lived in comparison with the duration of that of her rival. Rome still exists, however shorn of her former splendour. But Carthage has been extinct for about twelve centuries, and her fate has been still more melancholy than that of her temporal predecessor. Of the ancient city, some ruins may still be found; but of the Church, not a single lively stone is left. Short, however, as her course was, she effected much while it lasted, and laid up a store of good service done to the cause of the Gospel, and of imperishable remembrance in the Church of God. Her writers have not been extinguished together with their country, as they were of yore; nor has Rome been allowed, through such compulsory silence, to have the history of the world all according to her own way and pleasure again. So far from it, that her Church taken through her whole eighteen centuries of duration, and with all the West in her train, cannot produce one writer whose fame can enter into competition with the bright names of Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine¹. Little could old Rome have dreamed of the result, when she imposed her language on the conquered province. This badge of temporal slavery became the ensign of spiritual liberty, and her haughty head was rebuked in her own tongue and before the face of the whole world, born and unborn, by the head of Carthage. It was

¹ Augustine, though a Numidian bishop, may be fairly claimed by her as head of the African Church.

indeed obliged to submit to provincial debasement in accommodation to the thoughts of a people of a very different moral and mental character ; for both from peculiarity of climate, and from commerce with the native population, the provincials gradually acquired an African character, in which was seen engrafted on Roman firmness an ingenious subtilty, as essentially different from Greek acuteness as it was from Greek comprehension ; and as far removed from Roman shrewdness as it was from Roman practical sense. The consequence is, that its two great writers, Tertullian and Augustine, are the most difficult of all authors. They require close, and even wearisome, attention. Their minuteness of disputation often draws out the sense to the very verge of evanescence, and their rudeness of style is perpetually a cause of obscurity. Often is the reader's temper tried, when, after unravelling the involving folds of a long period, he finds but a mummy of sense for his pains : and after having threaded the mazes of a contorted argument, he comes to a quibble at last. But, notwithstanding such defects, they were men of prodigious power and capacity, and their works have been, and ever will be, the study of the accomplished divine.

Foremost, as well in eminence as in time, of these gifted men, stands Tertullian, of whom Cyprian used to say, when he demanded from his secretary the volume of his works, " Give me my master¹." Many, on resuming him, have said to themselves the same thing in rather a different sense.

¹ Jerome's Catalogue.

Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus, who is so fortunate as to combine the privileges of being the earliest Latin Father extant, and of bringing his native Church out of impenetrable obscurity by the lustre of his name, was born at Carthage¹, about the middle of the second century. His father was a very inferior officer in waiting upon the proconsul, of merely nominal military character, called Proconsular Centurion². So closely attached to the person of the governor, he was not likely to be a Christian; and we might, therefore, have presumed, from this fact alone, that Tertullian had been brought up in heathenism. But the supposition receives confirmation from his writings³, whence we are also enabled to infer the manner of life which he pursued before his conversion. How he was enabled to have means and leisure for literary pursuits we are not told. Perhaps his father's station, though mean, was lucrative, or perhaps the boy's talents or qualities might have attracted the notice of some of the higher officers, who afforded him the means of improvement. Whoever set him to work, he was not disappointed. Gifted with a very quick apprehension, and this too combined (as it is not very often) with great mental vigour, impetuous in undertaking, but also most persevering in what he had undertaken, Tertullian made a rapid progress. He ranged through the field of science and literature, both Greek and Roman, until he had acquired a

¹ De Pall. 2. Apol. 9.

² Jerome, *ib.* See 8th note of Valesius on Euseb. E. H. ii. 2.

³ Apol. 18, and perhaps de Pœnit. 4.

prodigious fund of information. His writings show that he had carefully studied the works of the philosophers, of the poets, of the historians, and even of the lawyers and of the physicians. With the law especially he shows so intimate an acquaintance, as to have induced some to think that he had exercised it professionally¹. Thus he was unwittingly preparing himself with all his energy for a field of service of which he little dreamed, and punctually obeying a spirit which he did not understand. The contemplation of a person thus situated is full of affecting interest! To see the unconscious clay assuming form under the potter's hand, and Him who formed our limbs secretly in the womb, openly exerting his creative power upon the mind, to view the creature at his own free will following the guidance of his invisible Conductor, and when most energetic, most really dependent,—to compare the petty end which he proposes to himself with the mighty end ordained of God, the distance between them being as that from earth to heaven, and their mutual magnitude as that of a point in respect of the sun,—this is a view well-fitted to fill us with humility and thankfulness: with humility on considering how little a portion of our preparation for any service in God's Church has been of our own choice, or directed by us to the great end to which it has ministered: with thankfulness, on reflecting that our own careless and selfish proceedings should have been conducted by Him to so holy

¹ They rely too on the expressions in Euseb. ii. 2. But these do not go far enough to countenance the supposition.

a conclusion. In such a frame of mind as this, Tertullian must often have looked down from the pinnacle of his ripened faculties and station of profitable service in the Church of God, to the employments and objects of his youthful years, and seen that all the paths which he had struck out at will in various directions converged to one point. What formerly had seemed mere accident, might now have been discovered to have been a critical step or turn in his course—his whim to have been God's design, his disappointment, the success of God's object, and his most reckless caprice to have outstripped his most deliberate purpose, in the race towards the goal of God's provision. With what a heart would he then review his toils, his amusements, his triumphs, and his disappointments,—upon which, as upon waves, put in motion by the breath of God's Holy Spirit, he had been brought into his haven of rest. A particular spot, a particular walk, a particular conversation, a particular book, would then be remembered as having given him the starting-place on one of those converging lines, and would be painted to his mind's eye in all that lively freshness which memory ever gives to things which have unexpectedly turned out important after long insignificance, and even partial oblivion. Indeed the whole system of memory is changed with the change of the view of the end; apparent trifles emerge into light, while things of apparent moment sink down into the depths of forgetfulness.

An old age of sour and gloomy austerity has very frequently been preceded by a youth of levity and licentiousness. It is a natural change. The sense

of the vanity of all human enjoyment, the more intensely felt in proportion to the intensity of the enjoyment, which such experience produces, the mortifying views of human nature which it has discovered, the hopes which it has blighted, the opinions which it has falsified, the anxiety to flee as far as possible the regions of past temptation, the desire to make the reparation in one extreme equivalent to the number and magnitude of the offences in the other, the keen sense of revenge which the spirit delights in taking upon its seducer, the body,—all these contribute largely to such a change. Some, therefore, arguing from the temper shown in his works, may infer for Tertullian such a youth. And indeed, as contrasted with the purity of a Christian old age, a youth spent in heathenism must have appeared in any case very reprobate. But charity forbids us to suppose a youth more careless than ordinary, when the impetuosity of Tertullian's character is quite sufficient to account for the rigour of his after-life. With the curiosity and love of amusement which is natural to early years, he frequented the theatre and amphitheatre¹, and heartily enjoyed those spectacles which he lived to condemn in terms of such awful severity. He might then have joined in the usual cry of those places, "To the lion with the Christians²." Little did he think then of the imminent jeopardy into which those sounds would hereafter commit his body, or of the horror which the remem-

¹ De Pudic. 8. 10. I conceive, that in Res. Carn. 59. he may be speaking generally under his own person, as Paul in Rom. vii.; at all events, the word *adulteria* has a wide sense.

² De Spectac. 27. Res. Carn. 22.

brance of having uttered them would inflict upon his soul. That he disbelieved the religion of his country, derided its profligate gods, and laughed at its tales of future judgment¹, we may suppose, without imputing to him more levity than most of the educated youth of his day were guilty of. However truths ought to be accepted by our right reason, yet, if they have ever been presented to us from our childhood under forms which our ripened faculties spurn with derision, the mind, swayed as it is by the power of association, will spurn and deride them also, and the reason, far from being right and calm, is so prejudiced by a feeling of indignation at having been so long subjected to such unworthy thralldom, that it will not do its proper duty, and sever the legend from the truth. Insomuch, then, as freedom from the trammels of his old superstition was a preparation for receiving the Gospel, Tertullian was now prepared. But it were a great mistake to suppose that the divestment of belief in superstition is necessarily a half-way station in the road towards belief in true religion. The state of mind which has rejected the one is often most unfavourable of all to the entertainment of the other. That dislike and contempt of all restraint which has caused a man to throw off the shackles of one system, will not induce him to put on those of another, however reasonable may be its ordinances. The ground is not ready for seed merely because it is unoccupied. It may be rock, or sand, or such as the soil of salt and brimstone on the shores of the Dead Sea. It may have

¹ Apol. 18.

been trodden down into the hardness of marble by the innumerable wheels of the traffic of the world, so that not a chink is left through which a grain of seed shall penetrate. Infinitely more hopeful is the ground covered with thorns and thistles, and we can scarcely doubt that the great majority of converts consisted of such as heard the word amid the occupations of the conscientious performance of the rites and precepts of the religion of their fathers, and who, believing in its essence, had learned to bear with its superstitious forms and legends, if indeed they ever doubted of the propriety of that which law had sanctioned. These were the poor in spirit, in whose hearts the Gospel found a welcome.

In what manner it pleased God to call Tertullian, and to gather into the fold one who seems to have been so far off, is nowhere hinted in his works, or mentioned by other writers. And it is vain to conjecture, amid the numerous and manifold instruments of conversion which were then in operation. He might, like Justin, have beheld the constancy of a dying martyr, of one, perhaps, whom his own voice, joining the cry of the amphitheatre, had brought to the stake, and his generous impetuous temper may have caught divine fire from the spectacle. Or in the course of his curious and multifarious reading, he might have fallen in with one of the Christian apologies, which were so diligently circulated through the empire. The antiquarian lore by which they were distinguished might first have arrested his attention, and induced him to examine their tenets with patience. The truth might then have flashed upon him, and he might have yielded his heart and

understanding to the fulness of its light. But it is idle to speculate upon the origin of that which (humanly speaking) might have arisen from an accident utterly un contemplated, and therefore, when once forgotten, cannot be recalled to contemplation. But who, with the character of the man before him, can doubt the enthusiasm with which he embarked upon his new profession. To him it would administer a twofold spiritual delight, affecting him not in morals only, but also in intellectuals. The mind of the literary heathen must have been a mere chaos. As it could hold no distinct and satisfactory end in view, it had no permanent combining principle of thought and feeling. Its numerous acquisitions were as the fragments of a broken mirror, which, however near in position, reflected severally their different objects. But now the mirror was entire, and reflected but one object, the image of Christ. The man now for the first time felt himself whole. They may somewhat appreciate his delight, who, after long engagement in miscellaneous pursuits, have at length struck out one which unites them all under a single head, and confers on him a sort of despotism, by which he can accomplish his will with power unfelt before. But still more can they give him their sympathy, who, after having been long occupied in various branches of human learning, and of worldly accomplishments, have found a post of service in the Church of God, round which they all flock with ready and profitable ministry, as servants round a master. Humble, but most hearty, is their thankfulness for such a calling, for such a crown of blessing to such undeserving exertions. Never did convert bring into the Church

a richer store of useful acquirements, than those with which Tertullian was furnished. Nor was he likely to allow them to slumber in unprofitableness. With his active mind and ardent temperament, he was not likely to remain long among the common flock. His deep and varied information well qualified him for the office of a teacher, and the suffrages of the Church would readily second his inclination to enter into the company of preachers. He was ordained a Presbyterian¹, and his zealous character amply assures us of his diligence in his new office. But oral teaching was too limited a field for his ability and erudition. They were put into full employment by a much less tranquil occasion.

(A.D. 200.) Severus was now emperor, and had not yet declared himself a persecutor. Yet neither was he a protector of the most peaceable, and yet most injured portion of his subjects. The provincial governors unhappily found their interest in persecution, which at once gave them popularity², and filled their purses with confiscated wealth. The African Church was now sorely vexed by their cruel policy, which at all times found a ready occasion for its exercise. Every joyous festival was a day of sorrow for the Christian; and in proportion to the abominable impurity of its rites, was the hatred and rage of a cowardly and profligate populace, whom the fortitude and blameless life of the Christian met with so intolerable a rebuke. The lewd riot of the Bacchanalia inflamed them to that pitch, that, not content with the customary outrages against the living, they

¹ Jerome's Catalogue.

² Apol. 35. 49.

vented their fury in the cemeteries upon the dead, and mangled in a horrible manner the bodies which they had torn up from their last resting-place¹. Nor was public calamity and mourning less injurious than public joy, and if they were forbidden to sympathize with the latter, they were pressingly invited to share in the former. Then rose the cry, that the tolerated Christians were the cause of their misfortunes, and the infuriated throng rushed upon men, who, clad in sackcloth and ashes, were pleading with heaven for the public good. Tertullian now severely felt those miseries which in his unregenerated state he had inflicted. He witnessed the wretched condition to which the brethren were reduced, and fearlessly came forward and exposed himself in the front of the Church to imminent danger, by addressing an Apology to the magistrates of the province. Its main arguments are much the same with those employed by his predecessors. He exposes and remonstrates against the cruel wrongs suffered by the Christians, vindicates their desertion of the religion of their fathers by a detail of the absurdities and impieties of heathenism, and proves their innocence by a general review of their tenets and discipline. But its power is far superior to that of any former defence. Tertullian not only surpassed his predecessors in information and talent, but was peculiarly fitted by temper to treat such a subject. No one could express in such forcible language the indignant sense of injustice, or represent its detail in a more lively manner. None could press his arguments so closely, and

¹ Apol. 37.

few had so learned an acquaintance with heathenism, and could expose its follies with more bitter sarcasm¹, or whip its wickedness with a heavier lash². The subject, too, while it gave free scope to the range of his argumentative powers, neither allured him, nor compelled him to sophistical subtilties. The free and elastic vigour of a mind that had still half its strength in reserve pervades the composition; and if we put the mere mechanism of style out of the question, and consider the copiousness, the variety, the interest of the matter, the skilfulness of selection of topics, and the powerful grasp with which they are handled, together with the greatness of the occasion, it will not be too much to say, that it is the noblest oration among all which antiquity has left us. There cannot be a moment's doubt of the justice of such an assertion, if we will judge on the only indisputable ground, namely, that of its effect. In what a state of mind do we rise up from it! Its brilliant pictures are glowing before our eyes, its deep tone of declamation is sounding in our ears, its imploring, its condemning, its expostulating accents have touched our feelings to the quick. The sufferings detailed are the throes of the mother that bare us, and his description has brought them home to the hearts of her children. We have seen her in all her primitive and simple beauty of holiness on one side, and Rome in all her gorgeous trappings of bloody superstition on the other. Heaven and hell have been moved, and have entered into a mortal struggle, of which we are now enjoying the fruits, in a victory

¹ Apol. 42.² Apol. 35.

which has decided the fate of mankind for all eternity. What literary gewgaws do the finest orations of Cicero and Demosthenes appear after this ! How do we put them away as childish things, and feel ashamed that we should set such value on the vituperative filth which is poured forth upon Æschines and Antony, political rivals on the narrow stage of a corner of this little world.

The effect of the first Apology presented to the Latin world by so powerful a hand must have been great, both within and without the pale of the Church. Perhaps we shall not err in supposing, that the fame acquired by its publication induced Tertullian to visit Rome¹, the usual resort, as we have seen, of all who had gained notoriety in the provinces. In Victor, who was now filling the episcopal chair, he would find a kindred spirit, and the presbyters would not be slack in showing kindly feeling towards a brother who had done so great service to the Church. He was not likely to be unemployed here in writing, when he had proved himself so good an advocate, but which, among his many treatises, now came forth, it is quite impossible to decide. At the same time he laid in a plentiful store for future declamation against the pomps and vanities of the world. Although forbidden by his principles to enter such profane places, yet he could not but see the throngs of people eagerly pressing along to the circus, the theatre, or amphitheatre, and hear the shouts which echoed through the streets from those palaces of Satan. He care-

¹ He mentions having been there in *Hab. Mul.* 7. and implies it in *adv. Prax.* i.

fully informed himself of the particulars of the scenes which he dared not witness, investigated their origin in the recesses of brutal superstition, and thus qualified himself for discussion with the lax brethren who allowed themselves to be seduced by such unhallowed delights¹. It happened also, that at this time an embassy of the Parthian king had arrived at Rome, and Tertullian's enmity to earthly pomp was gratified with seeing the Roman matron's pride of dress put to shame, and her jewels look rare and poor, before the unbounded splendour of the Mede and Parthian, who were covered with gems down to the very shoes, which defiled them in the mire. He did not forget in after-time to humble female vanity with the example of these barbarians². Such scenes would confirm him more and more in those austere habits to which a man of his impetuous temper was naturally inclined on exchanging heathenism for the purity of the Gospel.

But within the Church itself, there would be much to scandalize so severe a brother. Seated in the centre of the luxury and splendour of the empire, it contained a much larger proportion of the affluent classes than any of its sisters. Its ministers were, therefore, more indulgent in the use of the world to their flocks, if not to themselves, and held the reins of discipline with a looser hand, than was deemed safe or proper by the Eastern Churches, and perhaps by the African too. So far from yielding any indulgence under such circumstances, Tertullian would

¹ See his very interesting treatise *De Spectaculis*.

² *De Hab. Mul.* 7.

have advised a tightening of the rein. The greater the luxury, the farther we ought, for safety's sake, to flee from it, he would argue, and his hasty temper would hurry him towards the contrary extreme. If the character of the Roman Church in any way resembled that drawn by him in his violent tract against the Psychics or Animalists, such counsel would be little agreeable to them, and he may have experienced at their hands a slight, such as a wealthy, but not very learned, body might offer to an ascetic scholar¹. Matters were thus ripe for an open rupture between them, when it was made by an event coming from a distant quarter.

Phrygia, including Galatia, was notorious for its fruitful production of heretics. The fanatic disposition of its inhabitants, which had signalized itself in the extravagant rites paid to Cybele, still influenced them after they had embraced the Gospel, and the Church saw sect after sect pour in upon her with barbarous inroad from its hills and valleys. A petty and obscure place, called Ardaban, sent forth Montanus, a new convert, who gave out that he was the Paraclete, being peculiarly inspired by the Holy Ghost to fulfil our Lord's promise of his mission, by putting the crown to that work which the Apostles had performed but not perfected under the same inspiration. He was joined by two women, named Prisca and Maximilla, who pretended to prophesy in extasies; and Pepyza, a small town in Phrygia, was dignified with the name of the Jerusalem that is above. A large body of disciples

¹ Jerome's Catalogue. See too the Life of Marcion.

was soon gained in a neighbourhood so favourable to fanatical pretensions, and the sect flourished. In doctrine they did not differ from the Church, but they insisted on a discipline so much more rigorous, as to disallow of second marriages in any case, and to increase the number and austerity of the fasts. As usual with all sects, they asserted exclusive claims to spirituality, and on every one that would not acknowledge the new prophecy, as they called it, they bestowed the title of Psychic or Animalist. Perhaps a growing laxity in the Church called for some restraint. But unfortunately, reforms are too often thrown into the opposite extreme of the abuse which they desire to heal, and thus their remedy is more pernicious than the disease¹. The Churches of Asia excommunicated the sect. But this, as usual, only added fuel to the flame, by giving it notoriety and importance, and made it the resort of all those spirits, which, being weak in the principles of their own profession, ever think that they find strength in a new one, and love the boast of undergoing persecution without encountering its dangers. Rejected by their countrymen of Asia, the schismatics sought favour in a quarter where the ignorance respecting their tenets was equal to the power to help them. But they were so long unsuccessful, that two bishops of Rome had refused communion with them, before they prevailed upon Victor to listen to them. His love of power, perhaps, was

¹ For the history of this sect, see Euseb. E. H. v. 16. 18. Epiphani. Hær. 48, Tertullian in various places, but especially adv. Prax. 1. de Virgin. Veland. 1. de Res. Carn. 63. de Monogam. 1, 2, 3. 14., and the book against the Psychics.

flattered by their application, and he had gone so far as to issue letters of peace, which should reconcile them to their brethren of Asia, when Praxeas, who had lately come from that quarter, gave him such an account of them as caused him to revoke his letters¹.

The ascetic principles of this sect were most agreeable to Tertullian, the countenance afforded it by Victor would please him, and in proportion the affront which he put upon it would irritate him. Men of this temper cannot brook the falling away, as they call it, of such as seem to have run ever so little with them on a new course, and are provoked to pursue it with greater energy than ever. So far, therefore, from joining Victor in his abandonment of those schismatics, Tertullian espoused their cause, defended it, and separating himself from the Church which had not chosen to be one with him, put himself under the excommunication to which they had been consigned. Thus he played a part which has been oftentimes played in the Church by men of warm and wilful dispositions, whose abilities, learning, and irreproachable character exempt them from that obscurity, and also from that comparative harmlessness which attends the performances of common schismatics. A man of proper humility of mind, and of proper spiritual patience and circumspection, would have laid no small stress upon the universal rejection of this sect by the Churches of Asia, and on the alteration of the favourable disposition of the Bishop of Rome. His charity would have led him

¹ Tertull. adv. Prax. 1.

to think that they had good reason for what they had done, and he would have thought it his duty to inquire most narrowly into the question, before he ventured to decide it in the face of such evidence. He would have undertaken the journey from Italy to Phrygia, sooner than break communion not only with all the Churches of Christendom, but with the brethren immediately around him. He would then have found out the real character of the sect. But, like Baxter and Milton, he could not submit to any thing or person that thwarted his perverse disposition, whatever argument they may produce. Their resistance was an assertion of superiority to him, whose pride could discern no middle point between that and submission; and the only terms to which he could accede, must be those of his own proposing. But nothing is so overlooked in religion as the humility of charity, which keeps a man content with the obscurity of his position,—and no one is more often mistaken for the victim of conscientiousness than the man of a proud, unyielding spirit, which prompts him—if he cannot be a despot within—to become a dreaded rival from without. No errors have done more mischief than his. Unsanc-
tified though they may be, they obtain sanction among men from being united (when they are most mischievous) with many graces of a Christian spirit, with deeds of charity, to which his patronizing spirit will add a spur,—with temperance and strict attention to morals, which his strength of will enables him to maintain without a moment's fainting. These obtrusive good qualities remove the eyes not only of fellow men, but even his own

from the inward deficiency. Our judgment of ourselves is too often but the reflection of the judgment of others, and we are but seeing our outward figure in a glass. But we do not straightway forget what manner of men we were ¹, but return again and again, to gaze delighted on the image in the flattering mirror, until we do forget our real and inward selves. How long will mankind be in learning the grand lesson, that the duty of true charity is to do good unto all men; and that in this is included, that we give offence to none. We are to seek a way for good, through good,—for charity, through charity: to be sure of the foundation on which we build, that it be not passion. It is a dreadful and lamentable thing to excuse our having yielded to passion, by continuing in a passion; and our having chosen error, by persevering in error,—shutting out in one case moral, in the other intellectual conviction.

Having separated himself from the body of the Church, Tertullian retired to his native country, full of disgust, and breathing defiance against the heads of his late communion. Yet his proud, exclusive spirit followed him in his exclusion, and he separated himself even from among the separatists, becoming the head of a sect, which, under the name of Tertullianists, was extant in the days of Augustine ². Henceforward we lose sight of him, except through his works, which tell us that he engaged in a series of writings, partly refuting the corrupters and opponents of the Catholic faith, and partly defending the discipline of his sect (for there was no difference

¹ Ep. James i. 24.

² See his *Lib. de Hæres.* 86.

in doctrine) against the Catholics. In these latter, he pours forth the bitter language of reviling and uncharitableness, which the spirit of sectarianism is too apt to employ¹. Of course he did not forget his quarrel with Victor and the Church of Rome, and thus delivers himself in indignant irony on their lenity in pardoning offences against chastity :—" I hear also that an edict has been put forth, and a peremptory one too : the Pontifex Maximus, to wit, Bishop of Bishops, saith, I pardon the sins of adultery and fornication to such as have done penance²." His tract on fasting is curious, as letting us into the customs of those times on this point. To us they appear sufficiently strict³, but they were far from satisfying the gloomy rigour of Tertullian, who says that the Catholics, or Animalists, as he calls them, controverted the Paraclete, rejected the new prophecies, not because Montanus, Maximilla, and Priscilla, preached a different God, or overthrew any rule of faith, but because they taught to fast oftener than to marry⁴, and both begins and concludes with a chapter most atrociously calumnious, conveyed in language so abominably gross as not to be fit for repetition. So could he allow his impetuous temper to sweep away before it all restraint of evangelical meekness, decency, and charity. But ascetics are frequently gross and coarse in language. Continually seeking to avoid the things of the body, and to be on the defensive at all possible points, they fill their

¹ See especially the treatises de Fuga in Persecutione, de Monogamia, de Pudicitia, de Jejuniis.

² De Pudic. 1.

³ See chap. ii.

⁴ Ibid. 1.

minds with improper ideas, which never occur to minds less scrupulous of purity. The imagination will run riot when extreme abstinence forbids every possibility of practice; and even what is indifferent before God is made heinous before man. As the famishing man dreams of banquets much more delicious than enter into the mind of others, so the ascetic never turns his attention to the enjoyments of the world (which to him are all a dream) but he runs into the utmost extravagance of description, and his exclusion from society has made him both ignorant and careless of propriety of language. In Tertullian's days such propriety was too little regarded by all classes. The rule which he drew was straight indeed. As Christ restrained what Moses had left open, so the Paraclete abridged the indulgence of Paul¹. The end of the world was at hand, and the woe pronounced by the Saviour to them who were with child, and them that gave suck in Judea², was shortly to be extended to the universal earth, with much greater severity, when not a single country should be laid desolate, but the whole world should be shaken³.

Looking through the loopholes of his retreat upon the world of enjoyment, and indignant that all should not be as sour and gloomy as himself, Tertullian sent forth a number of tracts, which, although their grand object was right and reasonable, exhibit a rigorous rule of life, which was very unlikely either to confirm new converts, or to win over more. Un-

¹ De Monogam. 14.

² Matt. xxiv. 19.

³ De Monogam. 15.

doubtedly the Church was somewhat relaxing the rein of strictness. Having made her way up to the easy life and more refined education of the superior classes, she paid dearly for her extent and reputation by the loss of that uniform simplicity which had formerly distinguished her. Some of her members began to see no harm in attending even the public shows, and the novelty of a Pythic contest, lately established at Carthage¹, perhaps seduced many to witness its unlawful sights. Although all such shows, both of the circus, of the amphitheatre, and of the stage, were expressly held in honour of the heathen gods; yet, with the usual resource of knaves and fools, some of these self-indulgent waverers might have defended themselves by abstract arguments, and maintained, in the language of the heathen apologists for these spectacles, that all things were made by God and given to men, and all were good as coming from Him that was good; that, therefore, no thing appertaining to these occasions—from the lion to the voice of the actor—was at variance with Him. Others however, more scrupulous, demanded the passages of Scripture to be pointed out to them in which shows were condemned². Against such violators of their vow of renouncing the devil, and his pomp, and his angels, Tertullian wrote his tract on the public shows, which is still remarkably interesting from the account which he gives of these amusements. The beginning and end are very characteristic of Tertullian. The first of his violent wresting of Scripture to his purpose. Not being

¹ c. Gnost. 6.

² De Spectac. 2, 3.

able to find there a literal condemnation of what had never entered into the thoughts of the sacred writers, he expounds the "way of sinners" and "the seat of the scornful," in the first Psalm, of those parts of the amphitheatre which were denominated "ways," and "seats," in the language of his day¹. The latter eminently exemplifies his violently exaggerated expression. After a passage of great beauty and grandeur, (deformed however by his favourite antithesis,) he comes to advert to the last grand spectacle of the day of judgment, and indulges in a strain of horrible exultation over the torments of heathen kings, philosophers, poets, players, all consigned to the flames of hell. Of course, the infidel has greedily laid hold of this cruelty of spirit in a Christian writer², and the scandal is a memorable warning to us against placing ourselves on any occasion in the seat of the scornful. But in defence, though not in excuse, of Tertullian, it should be remarked how a man of strong feeling, who is gifted at the same time with the vigorous expression of an ardent imagination, is continually tempted into the employment of language which none would be more sorry to see realized. No sooner does he think of a subject than a vivid scene is before his eyes, from which he culls, with all the proud mastery of pithy and pointed language, its most striking parts. If the temper be excited too, the more vivid still will be the scene, the more strong

¹ De Spectac. 3. But so does also Clem. Alex. Pæd. iii. 76. Strom. ii. 67.

² See Gibbon's Decline and Fall, c. xv. He seems to feel personally included.

the language. Possessed with the vision, he describes it as present, and, like a spectator, with little reference to his own feeling; and it requires more self-control than most minds at such a moment can summon, to forego the pleasure of venting a vigorous expression, however his cooler thoughts may afterwards condemn it. Thus he learns by degrees the habit of exaggerated language, and to utter more than he seriously intends. "He does not mean what he says," is frequently remarked in defence of the momentary effusion of a quick temper,—still more, when to this is added a quick imagination, is the remark applicable, and available against the charges of the dull, who think, and the malicious who represent, that what was but a flash across the mind too momentary to heat the heart, was a fire deliberately kindled and fed in the depths of a cruel bosom. Can we wonder, then, that Tertullian's language, always exaggerated, should assume such a tone on such an occasion? The eternal salvation of numbers of his brethren was placed in jeopardy by those idolatrous shows: from their detestable exhibitions issued forth the first howl of relentless persecution, and on their stage were exhibited the agonies of tortured martyrs.

Some loose professors also, with the hypocritical pretence "that the Christian name should not be blasphemed amongst the heathen¹," gave into compliance with them so far as even to observe the merriment of their festivals, and the unholy license of the Saturnalia introduced its banquets, its songs, and

¹ Ep. Rom. ii. 24. De Idol. 14.

viols, into a Christian household. To restrain such shameful indulgence, and to draw more distinctly the line of commerce with the heathen, he composed his work on idolatry. But the female sex especially provoked the sour and satirical reproof of this ascetic recluse. With that tyrannical spirit in which such men prosecute their whimsical opinions, he insisted upon virgins violating an innocent custom of their country and wearing veils in the church as well as abroad¹; and his arguments from Scripture, from nature, and from discipline, are worthy of the cause which he undertakes. They are very sophistical, and their fine-spun texture is curiously contrasted with the frequent coarseness, and occasional grossness, of his expression. He had much better grounds for his rebuke where his sisters in the Lord could so far forget the sober simplicity of a profession which had renounced the world, with its pomps and vanities, as to yield to the fashion, in painting their cheeks, in tinging their eyelids with black², in dying their hair red, so as to look like Gauls and Germans³, (a sorrowful omen, says he, is this fire-red colour of their future destiny,) in staining their grey hairs black, in wearing their hair now dissolved in ringlets, now compressed into unnatural curls, now piled up on the head like a helmet or boss of a shield; and in wearing wigs, which may have been taken from the head of some malefactor devoted to Gehenna⁴. With a ridiculous air of affected humility he adds, "Would

¹ De Virgin. Veland. 13.

² De Cultu Fœm. 4.

³ Ibid. 6. It was the colour in favour with Roman beauty.

⁴ Ibid. 7. see too Clem. Alex. Pœd. iii. 63.

that on that day of Christian exultation (the resurrection) I, the most miserable of creatures, may raise my head but among your heels, so as to see, whether you rise with white lead on your skin, with vermilion on your cheeks, with dye of saffron in your hair, whether the angels will carry one thus bedizened into the clouds to meet Christ." But still these were exceptions to the general rule, and answer to that small class of the present day which attempts to reconcile the vanity of fashion with the profession of spirituality. Very opposite, indeed, was the general character of the Christian matron. How beautiful, how exquisite, is the picture which he draws of this true mother in Christ. When she went forth from home, it was not to seek luxurious amusement, profane shows; not to gratify the curiosity of seeing, and vanity of being seen. No! every occasion which allured her abroad was one of sorrowfulness or solemnity. The sick were to be visited, and her circuit was through wretched huts. She was to go and kiss the chains of the martyrs in the public prison. Sacrifice was to be offered. The word of God was to be administered¹.

The extreme rigour with which he pushed his Montanist principles, is visible in his tract against flight during persecution. He deprecates any attempt to flee from it, coming as it does from God, though the Devil be the instrument². It appears again very strongly in his treatise on the military wreath, in which he applauds the scruples of a soldier who, on a gala-day, bore it in his hand, instead of

¹ De Cult. Fœm. ii. 11. ad Uxor. ii. 4.

² De Fuga, 2, 3, 4.

putting it, according to custom, on his head, and thus exposed his Christian fellow-soldiers, as they asserted, to unmerited reproach and needless peril ¹. His treatise on monogamy shows its purpose in its title. Among his works also are two addressed to his wife, in the first of which he dissuades her from a second marriage; in the second, supposing such a marriage, he deprecates a heathen husband. The fact of his writing to her seems to imply a separation, according to the rigid rules which he had now adopted. It was to be expected from his temper that he would be warm in his praises of martyrdom. His language is, indeed, extravagant, and presents a singular contrast to the cool consideration with which his contemporary, Clement, treats the subject ². So rapturous are his expressions, as to approach those in which the Goths spoke of their Valhalla, and Mahomet of his Paradise. When all his substance is spent, the prodigal is restored by martyrdom ³. The sword is the porter of Paradise, the martyr's blood its key, and the martyr falling in the defence of God, not by lingering fevers and in bed, but through a death, novel in the cause of God, and extraordinary in the cause of Christ, is received with a different and privileged hospitality ⁴. When such a prize was offered, is it to be wondered that many worthless men suffered, and that Clement should speak as he does ⁵?

We cannot find room to follow Tertullian through

¹ Some of his arguments seem very puerile; they are, however, employed also by Clem Alex. *Pæd.* ii. c. viii.

² See Strom. iv. c. xii.

³ *De Pudic.* 9. c. Gnost. 6. and *Apol.* in fin.

⁴ *De Anima*, 55.

⁵ See also Cyprian, *Epp.* v. vi.

his numerous writings. Yet one class must not be quite forgotten. He took up the weapons of controversy against the heretics. Marcion was attacked in a long and elaborate work, in which there was ample scope for his coarse invective and sarcasm, for his sophistical refinement of argument, for his fanciful expounding of Scripture, and for his extensive information on the subject of ancient philosophy. Perhaps the ascetism of that heretic only exasperated him the more against one who, agreeing with him in so peculiar a point, disagreed in others. Nor did he forget Praxeas for the ill turn which he had done the Montanists, but wrote to refute his Patripassian tenets, and took care to remind him at the outset, in no very courteous language, of his kind service. These works form a sequel to others which he had directed against Valentinus, Hermogenes, and others. Thus he could write against heresy, unconscious that his own schism was working but too effectually to give it increase.

This notice of his works was necessary in the case of one of whom we know so little from other quarters. Confined within the narrow circle of a fanatical sect, and shrouded from view among people immeasurably his inferiors, he was lost to the eyes of the Church as much as to her communion. She only heard him, as ever and anon he poured forth against her discipline the revilings of his indignant spirit, or defended her doctrine against an opponent whom he still more disliked. Nor had his voice no effect. There remained within the pale a considerable party which the reaction of the growing laxity of the times threw into a rigorous extreme, and which would agree with his

deductions, although it would not admit the authority whence he derived them. It eventually triumphed in the establishment of Monachism; and partly, perhaps, to this cause may be attributed the preservation of such works of Tertullian, as are rank with Montanism, from the fate which has attended the writings put forth in its peculiar cause by every schismatic and heretic of former times. How painful it is to think that a man so highly gifted, morally and intellectually, a man who might have stood in the front ranks of the Church, and left a glorious name both among her champions and her stewards, should, by the indulgence of a gloomy temper, have retired into the rear! that he should have aided in causing those divisions in the Church which so weakened her line both of offence and defence against the heathen, and furnished them with such plausible ground for reproachful remarks and specious arguments against her!¹ This mischief, most probably, did not present itself to Tertullian as a consequence of his own work, and he experienced the evil fate of sectarians, who, confining their view within their own narrow pale, see not how their principles affect the universal Church. But principles originating in narrowness of view do not operate in narrowness of space. Nor is it until he feels that which he has sent forth returning into his circle with such accumulated mischief as to threaten the destruction of his own fabric, that the sectarian understands or feels its pernicious nature, and then he ascribes the evil to causes without rather than within. The re-

¹ Clem. Alex. Strom. vii. 89, &c.

mote situation of Tertullian, probably, hid from his knowledge the extravagances of which his sect was guilty in Asia; and the report of the venality, luxury, and profligacy of some of its chiefs¹, might never have reached his ears. If they did, a chain of testimony through such a distance might be too weak to bind the belief of one so unwilling to believe. Let us here, also, do justice to Tertullian, in confessing that his separation, although merely on points of discipline, was not on such trivial ground, as those who may follow his example in these days almost universally take up. It rested, in fact, on a doctrinal ground, inasmuch as he believed a new discipline to have come from the Holy Ghost through Montanus. So believing he was bound to accept it, and accepting to separate from the body which refused it. How he might have been prepared to believe we have already seen, and shall do well to profit by the lesson. Thus secluded by his own will from the public stage of high service to which he seemed invited, and scornfully reviling a Church which he might so brilliantly have adorned, he breathed his last in a decrepid old age, amid obscurity and silence².

Both the moral and literary character of Tertullian is full of interest. Viewing him as to the former, we are immediately struck with the truth of the Apostle's declaration, where he insists on the necessity of charity to perfect a man. Tertullian had faith, and he had hope; yet how different is his example from the model of St. Paul, whom he, of all the Fathers, most nearly resembles in vigour of

¹ Euseb. E. H. v. 18.

² Jerome's Catalogue.

understanding, and ardour of temperament. How evidently unscriptural it is, notwithstanding his strictness of morals and religious devotion ; and how can we account for the loss of the essential element which should give life to it ? The immediate cause lies in his ascetism. A fiery temper is in itself not the most disposed to charity, and requires much and delicate management before its furious heat can be lowered down to the mild warmth of charity. But ascetism deals with it far too extremely, and the freezing rigour of bodily mortification will exasperate quite as much as the fiery excitement of sensual indulgence. Extreme cold will parch as much as extreme heat, and charity will wither equally under too much abstinence, and undue riot. Violent maceration of the body necessarily begets, and exceedingly increases, fretfulness of temper,—and the spiritual pride, which is both its parent and its progeny, exasperates it to outrage, at any resistance to the man's will. The seclusion also of the heart from all exercise of healthy affection causes it to grow stiff and harden. Under these circumstances the ascetic, having cast off from himself all bodily enjoyment, cannot endure to see it, however innocent, in the possession of others. It is an insult to his opinions, it is an undue advantage taken. Men are not fond, in the long run, of being singular, still less so in what is unpleasant,—and however pride, for a time, may support them, they are soon eager to have all the world like themselves. This pride is the offspring of ascetism, which, barren as it is of bodily offspring, is fruitful enough in moral ; and rickety children they are. The sufferer cannot sup-

pose that all his mortification, in which he so much differs from his brethren, is to go for nothing. He cannot but feel, though he may not dare to acknowledge, a merit in it. He is one of God's elect, and has the privilege of his House. Striving, according to the fundamental rules of ascetism, to be like God¹, he is led by his hasty vanity to do it by a short cut, and so makes God like himself. God, therefore, is proud as himself, and his own humility before him is much the same with that of a great man's sycophant, who is ever humble to the proud, and proud to the humble. Can we wonder, then, at the hardness of heart, the bitterness of feeling, the outrageous temper, the misanthropic satire, the uncharitable censure, which distinguish the ascetic, and have formed the staple of so many characters through ages of monkery? Thus it was that Tertullian's temper, originally fiery, became uncontroulable, and would have remained so, had he even possessed faith to remove mountains. Thus he fell into a schismatic selfrighteousness, which could find no fit companions within the fold,—thus he gave himself up to that uncharitableness on which God seems to have set His curse, hindering, as it ever does, the course of His service, and cutting asunder the channel of His mercies.

His literary character is still more remarkable. In him we come at length to the earliest, and also most celebrated of the Latin Fathers. Great indeed is the change after such uninterrupted converse with the polished Greek! We encounter at once a coarse

¹ See Clement of Alexandria, in almost every page.

language, and a coarse man. Truly Roman rudeness and insolence, which not even the power of Christian grace could thoroughly tame (so innately savage was the nature of this beast of prophecy), address us in the provincial roughness of an obscure and difficult language. From the natural heartlessness and treacherous reserve of its speakers, the Latin delights in a vague phraseology, and oblique construction, which hints rather than expresses; and reminds us that the language of the robbers of the world was no unfit vehicle also for the sentiments of the crafty tyrants of the Church. Notwithstanding the writer's absurd boast, the reader of the philosophical works of Cicero cannot but be struck with the utter incompetency of the language to express the nobler as well as the more refined speculations of the mind,—so that while theological Greek is still the same powerful and beautiful instrument with classical, and the new terms introduced are in harmonious keeping with the old ¹, theological Latin disgusts us with its coarse barbarism. The confession of the desperate criminal is ever at a loss for want of words; he knows not how to find expressions for the various combinations of mercy, justice, grace, and truth, which he is now at length compelled to consider. Such is the deficiency of the Latin when called to express the purity and peace of the Gospel, and hence the strange feeling with which we first encounter this unnatural state of the language in the

¹ How beautiful, for instance, are the novel terms *χάρισμα*, *ταπεινοφροσύνη*, &c.; as also the novel sense of *λειτουργία*, *παλιγγενεσία*, *Θεολογία*, &c.

works of Tertullian. This disagreeable novelty is not mitigated by the expressed character of the man. It was with a pleasurable feeling that we closed the volumes of his predecessors. We were no less soothed by their pervading spirit, than informed by their copiousness of thought. Far otherwise is it with this fellow-countryman of the insolent Victor. We rise up from the perusal of his works in a fever, and with our feelings, if not hurt, seldom indeed amended. The mind of the meek and mild Christian is disgusted with his continual strain of rude invective and coarse sarcasm, ruffled at his boastful overbearing tone, which hardly fails to intrude a suspicion of his good faith, and puzzled with the darkness and perplexity of his style. This latter especially bewilders him, by coming upon him with sentence after sentence of broken current, perpetually rebutting the course of the understanding with harsh construction and contorted meaning,—so that a passage of clear sense and direct flow relieves him much in the same way as the easy sweep of a long wave relieves those who have been struggling against what sailors call a short and chopping sea. His rashness often leads him into assertions which he cannot support, and urges him to follow a heretic into ground where he himself—having no more business than his adversary—falls into scarcely less absurdity. Sometimes, sooner than say nothing in reply, he will almost say any thing; and it had been amusing, had it not also been shocking, to see how, to serve the present purpose, he will interpret a passage of Scripture in defiance of common sense and plain meaning.

He is evidently proud of his powers of argument, and but too unsparing in their exercise. The Sorites and the Dilemma, with all their formidable tribe, appear in large proportions in his pages, watching and swallowing up their adversaries like the horrible creatures shown in water by the solar microscope. And the unyielding and intolerant spirit of his Roman character, united to the astute acuteness of his African nature, at once demands conviction, and employs the most captious argument to gain it. Our candour is shocked, and our patience severely tried, in wading through pages of hair-splitting sophistry, to which he expects his reader to submit and assent, as if it were solid reasoning. Even when we heartily agree with him, his argument is often directed against a position which seems to us too absurd to refute, or runs in favour of one which seems evident at first sight. His vehement temper also betrays him into a strain of declamatory exaggeration, which, even after we have learned (and, in reading Tertullian, a little learning is a dangerous thing) to make due allowance for it, causes us to tread his region with a very cautious foot. Such is sometimes the general effect, that we are irresistibly inclined to think more favourably of his adversaries than he would have us, and if some have learned from him how to deride and vilify heretics, others perhaps have been induced to treat them with too much tenderness. Added to all these particular defects, are the general faults of the Fathers, as, for example, their unexploring reception of facts, their uncritical interpretation of Scripture, their careless abuse of the system of type and prophecy. Yet we must except him from the charge of

their unconnected, desultory manner. The compactness of his arguments is most agreeably felt after their loose arrangement.

Having unsparingly pointed out his defects, let us proceed to do him justice, by reviewing his merits. On considering the corrupt style of his period, we shall no longer wonder at his declamatory tone, his affectation of point and antithesis, and that his epigram degenerated into riddle. We shall no longer wonder at what he is, but at what he is not. His peculiar style, although it be that which is addressed to times of strong excitement, rather than of calm good sense, is partly owing to his very excellencies ; and what in others arose from a consciousness of weakness, which sought disguise under rhetorical artifice and figure, in him proceeded from very strength, and richness of mind. This, both from acquisition and from native power, was exuberant in matter. It had been cast originally in a peculiar shape, whence would result a peculiar mode of expression, and charged as it was with an accumulation of ideas, it was unable to draw them to a head, as it were, and give them distinct utterance, except by a pithy antithesis, which seems to serve with him nearly the same purpose as those contrivances of the painter, which bring out to the eye, or rather excite in the imagination, a whole cluster of objects, by means of the contrast of light and shade. This extreme condensation of matter renders him indeed obscure, and yet his composition flings forth bright gleams, although they more resemble those which are reflected from the dusky marble of his native country, than those from the Parian, with which the

Attic carved and built. While some writers are obscure from the wordiness of vague feebleness, so that we find it difficult to bring the thinly-scattered ideas together within a proper distance for the eye of the understanding to comprehend, he, on the contrary, is difficult to be understood, from the ideas lying so close and clustered together, that the eye cannot readily separate them sufficiently for distinct perception. Never for a moment is he feeble, but displays throughout a muscular vigour, though its display be so coarse (it must be confessed) as to remind us much more of the statue of the flayed Bartholomew, than of the torso of Hercules. To this mannerism are owing his greatest beauties. However disagreeable a quality it may be in general, it has a wonderful charm, when the author's peculiar powers and disposition, which gave it birth, come into play. Its very defects then give beauty. In fact, being natural, it is no longer mannerism. We are sometimes struck with the inexpressible, and almost heavenly sweetness of a smile, suddenly relaxing into playful wreaths a fixed and gloomy countenance. Such is the effect of some passages in his writings¹.

We ought also to bear in mind, that almost all his works are controversial. Now it is the nature of controversy (as of every kind of war) to change its ground of dispute. Primary points are forsaken for secondary, and these again for others still more mi-

¹ I would refer for examples to *Testim. Anim.* 1; *De Anim.* 43; *De Idololat.* 18; *Ad Martyr.* 2; *De Res. Carn.* 12; *c. Gnost.* 10.

nute ; so that the quarrel which began upon an essential doctrine, will end upon the propriety of a garment. Such is the shifting and elusion of the combatants. Thus there is nothing so wearisome as extinct controversy. We are met with trifling and incidental points, which became each in their turn the engrossing topics of the day, and then sank into merited neglect. We wonder how persons could so abandon common sense, so forget right feeling, so waste precious time. In Tertullian's case, however, we must consider the very shuffling game which the heretics played, and we may excuse much of his warmth, when we consider how through them the Christian name was blasphemed among the heathen, and weigh the imminent peril in which they set the Church, both from within and from without, in addition to the dangers with which the pure faith was already struggling, in all the agony of a desperate conflict. Nor should we omit to take into account his austere mode of life, which would re-act so violently on a gloomy temper, and to make some account of the temperature of his native climate, which tends so much to irritate the bile and depress the spirits. We cannot but occasionally be prompted, amid our reading, with the suggestion that this passage was written towards the conclusion of a rigorous fast, and that under the irritation of prickly heat. And who will seek to find fault with a man who wrote as he thought and felt ?

On the whole, Tertullian, like all great men, is great in his defects. They are such as to throw his excellencies out from the canvass by breadth and depth of shade. Many have imitated his faults, and

indeed, he seems to have been the model after which the writers of the Latin Church have framed the calumnious, dogmatical, and sophistical character, which distinguishes their controversial writings. But his beauties lie far beyond the reach of the great majority of such writers, who have his violence without his strength, his sophistry, without his powers of reasoning, and his grossness, without his imagination. So integral a portion have his works now become of the documents of the Church, that the deed-chest itself must be lost, when they shall have ceased to be extant. They will continue visible and legible until the last day, when the Saviour shall come to judge him for the good and the evil which through them he shall have committed.

In points of doctrine, it has been already seen that he agreed with the Church from whose discipline he had separated. It will be sufficient to refer to a few passages on some of the chief articles. He maintains the doctrine of original sin¹, of the light of nature², of free-will, subject to God's grace³; of baptismal regeneration⁴; of justification by the blood of Christ, through faith⁵; of the Trinity⁶; and the incarnation, resurrection, ascension, and future coming in glory of the Son, are mentioned, together with other essential articles, in two short creeds⁷. Owing to his discussions on the nature of the soul, which he main-

¹ De Test. Anim. 3.

² De Pud. 9. De Anim. 41.

³ De Anim. 21. c. Marcion. ii. 5. De Exhort. cast. 2.

⁴ De Anim. 41. Resur. Carn. 47.

⁵ De Pud. 19. c. Marcion. iv. 35.

⁶ Adv. Prax. 2.

⁷ See de Præscript. Hæret. 13. Adv. Prax. 2.

tains to be corporeal, and to have figure¹; he is far more explicit upon the notion of an intermediate state than any predecessor. He supposes a place in the inner parts of the earth, whither Christ descended at His death, to be the receptacle of departed souls until the day of judgment². Here, in the expectation of their sentence, they had a foretaste of their future happy or wretched lot³. The martyrs, however, enjoyed the privilege of being transferred immediately to Paradise⁴, a place of divine bliss assigned to their spirits⁵. He maintains the doctrine of the millennium⁶.

His works also afford a rich mine of Christian antiquity. From him we learn that sponsors were required in infant baptism⁷, that it was administered either by the bishop, or by priests and deacons under his authority⁸; that it was immediately followed by unction, and imposition of hands, which was accompanied by the invocation of the Holy Spirit⁹; that it was commonly conferred during the season from Good Friday to Whitsuntide¹⁰; that heretics were to be rebaptized¹¹, a tenet much agitated after his time; that it was necessary to salvation¹².

¹ De Anim. 22. de Res. Carn. 17. ² De Anim. 55.

³ Ibid. 58. De Res. Carn. 17. Adv. Marcion. iv. 34.

⁴ De Res. Carn. 43. De Anim. 55. ⁵ Apol. 47.

⁶ Adv. Marc. iii. 24. Apol. 32. Ad Scap. 2.

⁷ De Baptism. 18.

⁸ Ibid. 17. See the ceremony described in Coron. Mil. 3.

⁹ Ibid. 7, 8. ¹⁰ Ibid. 19.

¹¹ Ibid. 15. De Pud. 19. Considering that these Heretics held not the same God, his decision seems quite just. See too Firmilian's Letter to Cyprian.

¹² De Bapt. 12. deduced from Joh. iii. 5.

We learn, also, that the Eucharist was celebrated before day-break, and administered by the hands of the bishop¹; that he considered the bread the 'figure' of the Lord's body, but contended for a real presence², and that prayers and offerings were made for the dead³. We find the observation of the Lord's day, of Good Friday, Easterday, Whitsunday⁴, and of the fast preparatory to Easter, and, also, the half-fasts or stations held on every Wednesday and Friday⁵.

One grand event of which we find an awful expectation, as being near at hand, expressed in various parts of his writings, Tertullian died without witnessing. This was the dissolution of the Roman Empire, which he imagined (probably from his view of Daniel's prophecy) to be immediately preparatory to the end of the world⁶.

This notion was the more readily supported by his sect, not only because it was agreeable to their sour and gloomy temper, but because it also afforded an argument for their abstinence on the point of marriage⁷. He is one of many whose predictions of immediate events a course of many ages, revolving without exhibiting them, has falsified, and whose solemn

¹ De Coron. Mil. 3.

² Adv. Marc. iv. 40. Surely the term *repræsentare*, (see *ibid.* i. 14.) can hardly be accommodated to the same sense. Compare its senses in de Patient. 3. Adv. Marcion. iii. 24. especially *ibid.* v. 12. See his expressions in De Orat. 6. De Idol. 7.

³ De Monagam. 10. De Coron. Mil. 3. De Exhort. Cast. 11.

⁴ De Coron. Mil. 3. ⁵ De Jejun. 2. 13. 14.

⁶ Apol. 32. 39. Ad Scap. 2. De Res. Carn. 24.

⁷ De Monagam. 16.

expressions of confident expectation seem ridiculous in proportion to their very awfulness. Seeing the end still delayed, we seem almost to mock, by our existence, the ashes of these disappointed prophets, which are lying quiet and unconscious at a time when they thought to be enjoying that world which was to follow the ruins of this. Let us be warned, then, not to be too eager to realize the unseen things of hope, nor to grasp with rude impetuous hands the matter of prophecy, and forcibly crush it into the mould of events, in which ourselves, forsooth, shall be actors. Let us not, by extravagant interpretation, exhibit once again the follies of the Montanists, and display to the Christian world that fearful portent which marked the troublous days of our forefathers, six generations ago. Events are, no doubt, converging to a much grander end than they were in the days of Tertullian, when symptoms of the dissolution of the empire began to be discernible to every careful eye. But let us not indulge a vain and selfish curiosity in endeavouring to fix the end of that of which God has permitted us to see but the beginning. Let us be thankful that we have seen so much, and gazed with eye of flesh on what was denied, save to the spiritual eye of so many blessed saints. We have enjoyed much that they in vain desired. If, then, wider fulfilment shall suggest a stronger hope, let the many disappointments inspire a greater caution. As far as every requisite satisfaction can be demanded by our faith, we have seen our Redeemer's day. Let us, then, like Abraham, be glad.

ALEXANDER OF JERUSALEM.

Effects of pilgrimages to holy places—Alexander a student at Alexandria under Pantænus and Clement—Elected to a bishoprick in his native country Cappadocia—Bad character of his countrymen—He is imprisoned—Undertakes the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and is elected Bishop there—His intercourse with Origen—Establishes a library at Jerusalem—His martyrdom.

SUCH a pilgrimage as Hegesippus had undertaken in search of apostolic monuments had, at the close of the second century, become less necessary. His labours had much exhausted the field, and the progress of time had brought all the Churches, which were worthy of such a visit, into so continual communication, that none had by this time any peculiar documentary depository which was not well known and open to the rest. Assured by such works as his, as well as by continual experience, that the same tradition prevailed from Edessa to Rome, informed also by him, and by others, of whatever was interesting in the histories of the various churches, men had ceased from enquiry into those matters, as they

would from working an exhausted mine. And, indeed, at such a distance as time had now brought them to from the main vein of apostolic tradition, they were likely to dig up as much rock as ore.

But another species of pilgrimage still remained, and grew in proportion as the other declined. The scenes of the early transactions of the Gospel could not be made common property. The tomb of the Redeemer, the hills of Zion and Moriah, the lake of Galilee with its bordering towns, so rife with monuments of His acts of wonder and mercy, the mountains of transfiguration and ascension, could not be transferred, nor could the mind of the spectator express in language and carry away to communicate to others the more delicate and precious fragrance of the lessons which he thence imbibed. By far the greater number, both of the words and deeds, to which these scenes had been present, had found no record : but the mind which had been enriched from the treasure-house of scriptural information would be enabled to make a large addition to its store from the very sight of such witnesses. Its previous notions would gain clearness and point, and the imagination could replace upon the spot somewhat of that which had been lost, and, if not with reality, yet, with probability. The admonitions of the spot, have, in every age, and by all classes of men, been valued for the liveliness with which they preach ; and the more copious the train of facts with which memory can people it, the longer and louder is the lesson.

But after all it must be allowed that such preaching is most liable to abuse, and as the vulgar confine

their admiration to the loud voice and extravagant gesture of the preacher in the pulpit, so in these exhorters they require similar exciting externals, neither is interest slower in supplying their wants in this case than in the other. The tomb is encrusted with gems and illumined with tapers, the hard flint is stamped with the indented trace of feet, the hole is dug for the cross, and striking rites are superadded to make the due impression on minds so gross and common-place. Not even the most highly cultivated minds can altogether escape the evil effects. They are led to put too much value on impressions thus received, and to rate too highly the temporary fervour which they produce. As far as our devotional feelings are excited merely through an imagination kindled by outward objects they will not endure very long. Derived from earth they are earthy, and share the fate of all things earthy. We have been indulging too much in a sensual pleasure, and, however we may flatter ourselves that we have transmigrated, as it were, into the minds of the holy men, to whose outward senses those scenes were present as they are to ours, and whose thoughts and feelings they set into the same frame with ours, however we may think our spirits must have been purified by such habitation; yet, in cooler moments, we shall find that we have but gratified our curiosity, indulged our grosser feelings, gone to draw muddy water at a distance, when there was a clear spring at the door, and for this unrequired, self-imposed task have neglected some essential duty. In such overflowings of religious feeling, there is always a mixture of animal passion, pouring into it from the animal part which

has been gratified—a fit of such fervour may have been but a fit of self-indulgence, by which we have administered to ourselves that gratification which full vent given to passion always supplies, and the moments on which we have most prided ourselves may, in God's book, be written down among the least profitable. The calm, healthy, plain sense, which is so requisite for the proper and punctual discharge of our duties, despises such artificial stimulus, such administration of exciting drugs, and will not fail to remind us how the Crusaders could prostrate themselves at the tomb of the Redeemer, with hands and knees dripping with the blood of thousands of their butchered fellow men. If Sandys was more poignantly, was he more sincerely affected, when he sang his beautiful hymn over the tomb of his Redeemer, than when he partook of the symbols of his passion at the table of his parish church? Delightful, therefore, as such feelings may be, we can never be justified in going far for the avowed purpose of gratifying them, and satisfactory as they may be, we should bear in mind that they are very compatible with a most inconsistent life.

Such animadversions have been caused by our now encountering the first-recorded pilgrim, Alexander of Jerusalem, as he is commonly termed, from the sacred place which was the great theatre of his life. He appears to have been a native of the remote province of Cappadocia, which, noted as it was for the barbarous stupidity of its inhabitants, gave, notwithstanding, Strabo to literature, with Basil, Gregory Nazianzene, and Firmilian, to the Church, and had been among the earliest acceptors of the Gospel

of Christ¹. For his education he was obliged to pass the boundaries of his native soil, and the high reputation of the school of Alexandria attracted him, amid the rest of its large flock of disciples. Here he successively listened to the lectures of Pantænus and Clement, and ever after retained a lively sense of the benefit which he had received from such spiritual fathers. Through them also he obtained the acquaintance of Origen, to whom, though considerably his junior, he ever after looked up with reverent affection². Such friends recommend him at once. He could not have been otherwise than learned, discreet, sober, and pious, who was deemed worthy by such men of being their associate. Their testimony was afterwards seconded by the voice of his own countrymen, which called him to the episcopal chair of one of their cities, the name of which has not, however, been recorded³.

But, although settled in his native land, and placed in an honourable post among his countrymen, he must have felt the change severely. His master Pantænus, indeed, had given him a bright example of cheerfully quitting the most polished for the most rude society, and had found strangers, while Alexander returned to friends. Yet was his flock one, which, beyond all others, would try the patience of their pastor. The character of the Cappadocians was proverbially worthless. A common saying gave them an unenviable place with the Cretans and Cilicians, as the most villanous of mankind⁴. And a

¹ 1 Pet. i. 1.

² Euseb. E. H. vi. 14.

³ Euseb. E. H. vi. 11.

⁴ Κακποδοκαί, Κρήτες, Κίλικες, τρία Κάκπα κάκιστα.

well-known epigram, satirizing their venomous malignity, asserts that the serpent which bit a Cappadocian died of the bite. The province was famous for its abundance in horses, asses, and mules, and equally infamous for a like abundance of slaves and false witnesses¹. The value of man in such a province was scarcely rated too low, when it was put but at four times that of an ox, at the current valuation. Irresistible, indeed, is shown the might of the converting grace of the Gospel, which could reclaim such a character. The assertion of the Cappadocian's unenviable superiority over the serpent was realized in a very different sense. Under his Saviour's help, he bruised the head of the old serpent. The land of slaves became a land of spiritual freemen, and the false witness accepted the witness of the Spirit of truth. Knowing the ransom which had been paid for him, infinitely more precious than the cattle on a thousand hills, he no longer put himself in relative valuation with the ox. To carry on this important change was the charge of Alexander, and his sufferings declare the zeal with which he exerted himself. As a natural man, he would have the patriotic legislator's ardent desire to upraise his degenerate country, and he could present it with a code, which, instead of cramping the mind, as must every human code imparted at once, infused new life, and made it expand far beyond its originally narrow proportions. As the ambassador of God, his satisfaction must have far exceeded that of Moses, who gave but the shadow of spiritual ordinances to his

¹ Hor. Ep. i. vi. 30. Schol. ad Pers. Sat. vi. 77.

people. His was the delightful satisfaction of St. Paul, when he preached to his own countrymen, who shared so deeply in the reproach of the countrymen of Alexander; and if the recovery of a person yield to his attendants more pleasure in proportion to the violence of his sickness, this regenerator of his countrymen must have been blest indeed.

(A.D. 204—211.) But such exertions would not be allowed by the great enemy of mankind to proceed unchecked. The persecution set on foot by Severus in the tenth year of his reign reached Cappadocia in its progress, and Alexander underwent much suffering, in the face of which he made a glorious confession¹. We are left in ignorance of the length of his trial, but we find him still in prison seven years afterwards, at the accession of Caracalla. But we find also that God had given him a comforter in his affliction, and the solitude of his prison was relieved by the greatest of human consolations, the presence of a long-tried and valued friend. His old instructor Clement came to him; and who could cheer him with greater power of human wisdom and affection, or of divine knowledge and love? Nor were his friend's exertions confined within the walls of the prison, but also superseded much of his anxiety regarding the welfare of his flock, which continued to be guided and fed by the hand by which he himself had formerly been guided, and from which he himself had formerly fed. His chains were made still more light by news which reached him from Antioch, a Church with which he had pro-

¹ Euseb. E. H. vi. 8.

bably contracted a close acquaintance in his passages between Cappadocia and Alexandria. Asclepiades, the worth of whose character perhaps he knew from intimate friendship, had, like himself, gained a high reputation in the Church from his conduct during the persecution, and was now elected into the episcopal chair, vacant by the death of Serapion. Alexander sent a letter of congratulation through his friend Clement. "Light and easy (he says) hath the Lord made my bonds during the time of my imprisonment, on learning that Asclepiades, who is most fit from his merit, has, by divine Providence, been intrusted with the bishopric of your holy Church of Antioch¹."

(A.D. 212.) The accession of Caracalla did not allow the persecution to go on much longer. A careless, profligate youth, who never troubled himself with views of religion or policy, bestowed little notice on the Christians, and his neglect was a blessing. Alexander was set at liberty. Almost the first use that he made of it was to undertake a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Most probably, this purpose originated from the employment of the hours of his imprisonment. His sufferings for the name of Christ would bring vividly to mind the scenes of the sufferings of the Redeemer, on the contemplation of which he now so deeply and deliciously fed. And from Gethsemane and Calvary, the witnesses of His deepest humiliation, he could turn in triumphant joy of consolation to Mount Tabor, where He had been transfigured, and to the Mount of Olives, whence He

¹ Euseb. E. H. vi. 11.

had ascended into glory. The solitude and gloom of his prison would but render his imagination more lively, and such spots would be printed in glowing colours upon his mind. Much would he long to visit with his body the ground which he had travelled over repeatedly in spirit, and to see with his own eyes what he had been obliged to view through the testimony of others. So he set forth upon his pilgrimage, and, fresh from the dungeon as he was, how must he have enjoyed the light, and life, and fellowship, which everywhere surrounded him ! His bonds had been celebrated through the Church¹, and most gratifying, therefore, would be the reception which he experienced from the Churches which lay in his road. Among those would be Antioch, where Asclepiades would return the congratulations of his illustrious fellow-sufferer with the embrace of unfeigned brotherly love ; and two victorious warriors of Christ would meet from different quarters, and enjoy in mutual converse the peace which had succeeded to their long and laborious struggles.

And now the pilgrim was approaching the scene of his Saviour's last sufferings. Calvary, included within the new walls, was before him, and he was about to enter the gates when he was met by the aged Bishop Narcissus and his clergy, who, in obedience to a divine command (as is alleged), went forth to find an associate and successor to their infirm head in him whom they should meet without the gates. He must have been exceedingly surprised at a request, which was opposed to two established

¹ Euseb. E. H. vi. 8.

rules of the Church of those days. They forbade the translation of a bishop from his see, and allowed of no more than one bishop in one city. Here however, the pre-ordination of God excluded all ordinance of man, and with joy would the Hierosolymitan clergy acknowledge the divine appointment of one whom they already knew so well by good report, and who seemed so well able to supply the deficiency arising from the infirmities of the aged Narcissus. Alexander was now in the full vigour of life; and long experience, both in doing and suffering, had matured a mind on which no little care had been bestowed in preparing it for the efficient service of Christ. He seems to have combined the practical minister with the learned divine, and to have exercised in his day great influence throughout the Eastern Church. The neighbouring bishops in solemn assembly gladly ratified this election, and Alexander was constrained to yield to persuasions so urgent, and professing so high a warrant¹.

In so singular a manner was gratified his desire of visiting the sacred places, and of praying on the spots where the Redeemer and His disciples had prayed before. The tomb of the Saviour was in the city, the mount of His glorious ascension was before his eyes. It is true that Ælia could retain but few of the monuments which had made Jerusalem an object of such thrilling interest to the Christian. The Temple where the Saviour had taught, the house of the high-priest in which He had been examined,

¹ Euseb. E. H. vi. 11.

the council-room in which He had been condemned, the governor's palace in which He had been insulted and scourged, the streets through which He had carried His cross,—all these had been entirely swept away by the two-fold desolations of Titus and Adrian. But the two former objects, as not having been included within the limits of the old city, still survived in all their freshness, and reminded the pilgrim of the essential points of his belief. The pardon of his sins, and the gift of immortal life, were before him in every look which he directed upon them. Great, and deeply felt must have been the change from the remote and barbarous Cappadocia! Not only did he find, with every Christian brother down to this day, a home here amid the monuments of his faith,—not only was he daily instructed by them, and spurred to his duties at almost every glance that he cast around, but he was also brought into near communication with the scenes and associates of those happy days, when he was a pupil at Alexandria. Among others, the brethren of Antinoe, in Egypt, engaged his attention; and with that Catholic inspection, which, as we have seen, was cheerfully accorded to every bishop of those days, he exerted himself to persuade them to unity, and to that intent wrote a letter, of which only one of the concluding sentences is now extant. From it we learn that his venerable associate had reached the extraordinary age of 117, and could give him no other co-operation than that of prayer. But from such a man this was no slight help, and would do much of the work deputed to his junior, by the blessing which

it brought on the performance, and the comfort and courage it gave to the performer. Of all men Alexander was least likely to forego such a benefit.

But this change of situation brought him also the renewal of an intercourse which he valued beyond all other. Origen, obliged to flee from Alexandria, retreated to Cesarea. There he was kindly received by Theoctistus, bishop of the place, who fully sympathised with Alexander in his admiration of the man, and joined with him in persuading this famous catechist to give those lectures and interpretations of Scripture, the fame of which had gone forth from Alexandria throughout the whole Church. Thus was exhibited the novel spectacle of a man preaching in the Church (for at Alexandria his lectures were out of the Church) who had not obtained holy orders. For allowing of such irregularity, Alexander had to defend himself and his fellow Bishop in a letter to Demetrius, Bishop of Alexandria, who seems to have laboured under a mean jealousy of his servant's rising fame. He alleged in excuse three examples of eminent and godly laymen having been called upon by Bishops to address the congregation. Demetrius, however, cut the matter short by the recall of Origen¹.

(A.D. 228.) After some interval, Alexander had a fresh opportunity of renewing his intercourse with this valued friend, with whom he had not ceased to keep up a correspondence. An interesting fragment of this has been preserved, of which the date is uncertain, but the expressions are warm and lively.

¹ Euseb. E. H. vi. 19.

“For this (he says) is, as you know, the will of God, that the friendship which has been derived to us from our forefathers should continue inviolate, yea, rather grow more warm and lasting. For we acknowledge as fathers those blessed men who have gone before us, with whom we shall shortly be : Pantænus, namely, the truly blessed, and my master, and the holy Clement, my master and benefactor, and all others of the same description : through means of whom I have known you, who are in every respect my best master and brother¹.” This renewal was occasioned by Origen’s arrival at Cesarea, on his way to Greece, whither he had been despatched upon ecclesiastical business. It would appear that the two Bishops again sought to obtain Origen’s instruction for the Church of Palestine. To obviate, therefore, the former objection of Demetrius, they now conferred upon him priest’s orders². But here Alexander moved the wrath of the Alexandrian Pontiff to a higher pitch than before ; and it must be confessed, that his conduct seems to have been more influenced by admiration of his friend, than by cautious observance of the rules of the Church, or a nice regard to the feelings of Demetrius. To lay hands on one who was of another diocese, who was visiting him while publicly employed by his own Bishop, who was moreover catechist in the Church of that Bishop, all this without asking permission, does seem an infringement of those rules, both of order and of civility, which ought to regulate ecclesiastical intercourse ; and it must be acknowledged,

¹ Euseb. E. H. vi. 14.

² Ibid. vi. 23.

that Demetrius was thus furnished with but too good ground for his remonstrance, though not for the angry invective in which he conveyed it¹. But Origen was precisely one of those commanding characters, who are almost adored by their friends, and regarded with unmitigated rancour by their enemies; and Alexander was first among the former. He could not, however, retain Origen by him as yet, and was shortly again compelled to be content with the interchange of thoughts and feelings through the means of letters².

(A.D. 231.) At length, however, circumstances compelled his friend to take a final leave of Alexandria. With great delight Alexander and his fellow Bishop Theoctistus received him at Cesarea, again heard from his lips his expositions of Scripture, and listened with all the deference of disciples³. Whether Alexander received any solid benefit and sound instruction from such attendance may well be doubted. But that he drew substantial advantage from his advice and his help in other matters, we may infer from the notice of a library founded by him at Jerusalem, which is remarkable both as the first recorded attempt at such an institution in the Church, and as having produced for the public service such fruit as few others can boast of. In this collection Eusebius found the materials for his celebrated Ecclesiastical History⁴, and thus placed Alexander among those founders whom we venerate with a deep sense of their extraordinary wisdom and foresight, in having

¹ Euseb. E. H. vi. 8.

² Ibid. vi. 26, 27.

³ Ibid. vi. 20.

⁴ Ibid. vi. 20.

made provision for so much and so lasting good, and whose memory we fondly cherish, as of those who have been deemed worthy instruments for conveying the gifts of Divine Providence to His Church. The time had indeed arrived for such a collection. Oral tradition was daily losing more and more of its essence of truth, as the stream advanced farther from the fountain-head. Christianity had proceeded far from its starting-place, and its communication with the Lord and His Apostles was to be kept up through a wide and continually widening interval. In this lay the origins of the several Churches, the successions of Bishops, which it was so necessary to assert against the heretics, together with the history of their government, and account of their doctrine. Herein, likewise, were to be sought and found the cradles of the heresies which were still vexing the Church, and the antidotes which had been administered, ever as they arose, by pious and learned men. This library, therefore, was an invaluable magazine of spiritual instruction to the workmen in Christ's vineyard, with whom the painful task of weeding day after day, ever as heresy grew with time, increased daily in greater proportion to the more satisfactory labour of planting. The maintenance of the unadulterated faith required therefore such an institution. Where belief has not fast root in the past through written documents, but relies upon what is generally received by the present generation, it is rather to be called credulity than faith ; and it was the decline of learning, which, by leading to the neglect and destruction of such collections as this, rivetted the fetters of superstition upon the Church. The creed of such

teachers as have not examined the past, must cling fast to the present, as the parasitical mistletoe to the branches of the tree, by means either of long-prevailing custom, or peremptory statute. Otherwise, having no communication with the ground of ages, it must perish. How uncertain are such channels! How often has the fanatical aspirant to a spirituality which decried all learning gone on to deism, or to the opposite extreme of gross superstition! Between these two must soon lie the choice of that nation which is so short-sighted as not to have provided, or to have removed when provided, the means of sound learning. Would that every diocese were furnished like that of Alexander's, so that the clergy, by seeing whence they have come, might know also whither they are going!

Yet a melancholy comes over the mind, when we reflect upon the heavy losses which human carelessness has already caused. Of the treasures contained in Alexander's collection, it is painful to think how many are now irrecoverable. There was the original Greek of the famous work of Irenæus, there were the letters of Dionysius of Corinth, and of its founder, there were the histories of Papias and Hegesippus, there the Hexapla of Origen, there the Chronicle of Africanus, and there in due time also Eusebius's collection of ancient martyrdoms. There was found the certainty of what is now left to doubt, and there lay in the substance of fact what is now imperfectly, if at all, contemplated in the shadow of conjecture. How may we envy the students in it! The fountain-head of Christianity was not so distant

from the generation of Alexander as the commencement of the Reformation is from ours; and if we can pore, with a sympathy of near connexion, through clear consequences from causes which worked among them, over the volumes of Cranmer, and Jewel, Hooker, and Taylor, and Barrow, how must the reader of the works of the Apostles and their successors have been moved in those days! Delightful must it have been to Alexander to see the resort to his library of zealous students, to read perhaps a celebrated work which was indebted to its resources, and to reflect, that though his own voice must soon be silent in the grave, still he should leave behind him a thousand voices to proclaim to generation after generation the truth of the Gospel and the ordinances of the Church. Yet he might have experienced the melancholy feeling which has affected all founders in the midst of their glory, and have had some misgivings that the day may come, as it has long ago come, when the far greater part of these treasures would either be lost, or exhibited only in catalogues and fragments, as they are to us in the history of Eusebius; and he might have mourned in anticipation over the thankless incuriosity of man, and his reckless infidelity even to the cause of his own salvation. We may enter too into the feelings of the student, who in later and less fortunate times could turn over these volumes, could think upon the famous hands which had handled them before him, and the mighty minds which had derived their information from them. There is no occasion on which we more deeply feel our own pigmy insignificance than when

we stand in the midst of a library of sterling authors. The sight of the number of the masters of wisdom, and the thought of the power and variety of their genius and attainments, fill our minds with humility and dejection; and we take down their ponderous volumes with a sigh at our own wretched deficiency.

(A.D. 251.) Alexander had now been rewarded for the trials of his early life with an uninterrupted calm of nearly forty years since his election to the chair at Jerusalem. Such a period of such a length had never been experienced before by any Christian Bishop, and we cannot doubt that this able and faithful servant put it to good account. He seems to have well understood the wants of his age, and to have maintained throughout a high personal influence, which, having won by his firmness against the enemy without, he furthered by meekness and gentleness towards those within. The prosperity of the Church did not tempt him to any ambitious encroachments; and he maintained the utmost harmony with Theoctistus of Cesarea, whose position made him in a manner his natural rival. It was owing to the conduct of such good men that the Church did not suffer more deeply in the persecution which was now approaching. The accession of a mere soldier was never favourable to the tranquil enjoyment of the Church. To the severity with which his habits of military discipline instigated him to treat any departure from established and national customs, he frequently added the bigotry of ignorant superstition. With both of these Decius combined a hatred of all his predecessor's measures; and accordingly commenced a persecution against the

Church, which went beyond all former in its systematic violence. The battle was far more general and more fierce than ever yet had been fought by the host of Christian saints. The most cruel treatment was employed to compel them to blaspheme Christ, and bow to idols. They were beaten with clubs, stoned, scourged, and tortured ¹. The Emperor had recourse to the tyrant's policy, and aimed at cutting off the heads of the Church. Fabianus, Bishop of Rome, led the long train of mitred martyrs, in which followed the famous Babylas of Antioch, and the glorious company was joined by Alexander, who, like a veteran, was called after a long peace into the field, to renew his illustrious confession of Christ crucified. He was seized at Jerusalem, and carried down to Cesarea, to stand before the governor's tribunal. Having boldly maintained his profession, he was remanded to prison. It used to be said of his countrymen, that they inured their bodies to torture, with a view to their trade of perjury. This Cappadocian had inured himself by fasting and prayer to support the testimony of the truth. In his prison he would have the consolatory presence of his friends Theoctistus and Origen, the latter of whom was doomed not long to survive him. Here, after having reached a great age, he expired from the ill treatment which he had received ².

He is one of those men who are better known from their associates than from themselves, and from events than from writings. Such characters will be commonly neglected by most readers of antiquity.

¹ Euseb. E. H. vi. 41.

² Ibid. vi. 39.

Yet, as they give more scope for the expression of their thoughts and feelings, they are eagerly laid hold of by others, as those in whom they can embody the spirit which they have drawn from perusing the events in which they were engaged, and the volumes of their contemporaries. His life has been thought no unsuitable close to the list of holy men, the account of whose lives and writings has been attempted in this work.

CONCLUSION.

Description of the stage of society in which the Fathers lived—Its fitness for the propagation of the Gospel—Singular view presented by the simultaneous and independent operations of the Church and the heathen government—Our neglect of this interesting and instructive ground—Writings of the Fathers—Didactic or Homiletic—Controversial—Exegetical—Their style—Influence of the Gospel on Literature—Excuse for their faults—Their moral code, why so austere—Why so much more explicit than their doctrinal—Review of our own position as compared with that of the Fathers—Comparison of our state in theology—In its literary composition—In morals—Exhortation to the study of the Fathers.

THE man who has gone through a gallery of portraits of distinguished characters, and pondered, as he gazed, upon their eventful history, is naturally led, on coming out, into a train of general reflection, through which he arrives at certain results, the abiding fruits of his amusement. At the termination, therefore, of the long review through which this volume has gone, where the pictures have been those of holy preachers and martyrs, or their opponents, it

seems proper to express some of the leading thoughts and feelings with which the mind is possessed. The principal idea round which all the rest cluster is the peculiarity of the times in which they lived.

Were we to divide the progress of society into three stages, as, 1. its infancy, when imagination unduly predominates over reason; 2. its manhood, when these two powers are in due balance; 3. its decline towards second childhood, in which reason unduly predominates over imagination; we should fix in the last the days of the fore-mentioned characters. Owing to long and prevailing ease, literature descends into lower classes than before, and as they, being the majority, become its patrons, to their taste its style is adopted. But as their leisure admits but of amusement, and not of study, the staple of such a literature will be flimsy, and its character tasteless. At the same time, the vast accumulation of knowledge which has come down, and the curiosity and habits of observation which have been fostered by ready communication, lead to selection and classification; and, unable to comprehend the enormous mass, men seek satisfaction in general views. The result is a rationalizing turn of mind, which is as much inferior to healthy reasoning, as the discernment of the differences of material subjects, to which the sensual indulgence of the age confines its attention, is to that of moral, to which men have become indifferent. Moreover, the heartlessness produced by luxury is fast destroying that deep and genuine feeling which is essential to imagination, and the habit of reading rather than thinking, taking away men from observing for themselves, deprives this

power of its proper food. Hence it is irregular without vigour, showy without beauty, obscure and shadowy, its creation a sick man's dream. But without the aid of this power, reason becomes abstract and unpractical. Thus both these grand powers become unpractical, merely speculative, and consequently mischievous. Reason, however, on which man most prides himself, to which, therefore, the vanity of the age most pretends, has the predominance. A field is open to it, from which the other is excluded. In its lower departments it is busily employed in procuring the amusements and comforts of life. The general result of this unpractical state is a dislike to all that is definite. Wild theories, hastily taken up, and as hastily laid down, proclaim the general indifference to truth: the stable basis of antiquity is derided, for the past is definite; but schemes of amending or improving the present are applauded, for the future is indefinite: all attachment to locality is broken up, religious principle has vanished, patriotism is consequently unfelt, and the bonds of society are in dissolution. Meanwhile, a gaudy exterior of refinement covers this charnel-house of corruption. Aqueducts, palaces, theatres, streets, and roads, proclaim the increase of public convenience to the eye, while books announce the public degeneracy to the mind. It was thus that in ancient Rome, when the mental powers had achieved their grand conquest, she sat down to enjoy the bodily fruits. She laid aside her moral and intellectual weapons, and rioted in her Capua. And shocking indeed were the scenes of that riot! From emperor down to slave was one general wallowing in all the

imaginable, and hitherto unimaginable, filth of iniquity.

In such an age was the cradle of the Gospel placed, and the extent of its healing power was shown by being immediately applied to the extreme case. In its very infancy it strangled the serpent. The period too, notwithstanding its iniquity, was most suitable to the diffusion of the truth. The very rage of curious novelty may have caused it to be taken up, and it would not be readily laid down again, like the fantastical systems of the day. It was found a cure for the sickness and aching of heart, which the infidelity and cruel profligacy of a highly-refined stage of society ever produces. The easy and rapid communication between every quarter of the civilized world aided its diffusion, and the waves of luxury bore the ark of God from shore to shore. Nor would the dissolving cohesion of society, which is ever naturally accompanied with the love of clubs and associations, be unfavourable to the progress of one among the many brotherhoods which were established. The decaying influence of the thoughts and habits derived from antiquity would also especially promote its reception, and Terminus gave way before this last and fatal destroyer of the boundaries which Numa had ordained for the Roman mind.

How awful and heart-stirring is the scene presented by such days to the reflecting mind, as it sees the preachers of the Gospel going forth amid the surrounding wickedness, as to spirits bound in prison : as it beholds them standing erect amid

the general prostration of moral and intellectual man, and finds the grace of God abounding, where iniquity hath more abounded: as it hears halleluiahs and hosannas rising above the general din of the blaspheming profanity of the heathen world! And how singularly interesting is the contemplation of the history of this period! We seem brought to a spot whence we behold at once the rich man in the abyss, and the poor man in Abraham's bosom. Emperors are sending forth captains with their armies against the barbarians; bishops are dispatching their companies of preachers against the infidels; senates are held to deliberate on the conquest of the world of flesh; councils are convoked to extend the dominion of the world of spirit. Here, we are concerned in the administration of kingdoms and provinces; there, of dioceses and churches. Historians of the empire, annalists of the Church; poets and philosophers, apologists and preachers; triumphs and martyrdoms; temple and church; eagle and cross;—all these present themselves at once on opposite sides of the same scene, like two worlds, near together and yet distinct. Occasionally a contact takes place—as when the holy martyr stands on the floor of the amphitheatre. But when his blood has flowed, the short-lived coherence is dissolved, and our attention is separately engaged as before.

This view, so extraordinary, is peculiar to the period of which we are speaking, and its singularity should incite us to survey it with greater attention. We understand not half the working of the Gospel without it. It is the only case in which we see its

operation distinct from the general economy of the world. Ever since that time the visible Church has ceased to have foreign interests and a separate history. She has been entertained in the land, and mingled her history and institutions with all around her. How strange it is that ground which affords such scope for philosophic analysis should have been so neglected ; and that men should not be as eager as the chemist to lay hold of the opportunity of detecting the two grand component parts of the specimen in a state of separation. But the very name of religion deters too many such inquirers from this ground. They are not likely to delight in the taste of the separate and pure state of that which they find bitter, even when combined with the agreeable elements of the world. Others, again, are frightened at the thoughts of the spectacle of mere heathenism, and shrink from it as from an unhallowed and forbidden sight. Thus the most singular, and by far the most instructive portion of the history of the world has been neglected ; if not from indolence and incapacity, from that timid and uncandid spirit, which, whether influenced by good or by bad motives, is alike unrewarded and unblessed. The mischief of the prevalence of such neglect is daily seen in the unblushing misrepresentations of Christian antiquity, which are put forth to suit a present purpose ; and very often by men, who, ignorant themselves of the real state of the question, presume upon a still greater degree of ignorance in their readers.

Having taken this sketch of the times in which the earlier Fathers lived, we may now more readily and more accurately discuss their merits, as teachers of

the Gospel, as men of literature, and as inculcators and practisers of morals.

I. At a time when the Church was in virgin purity, and the renunciation of the pomps and vanities of the world, professed in the baptism of water, was maintained by a continual baptism in the fire of persecution ; when most careful instruction had been bestowed before men were admitted to the mysteries of the faith ; when too the leading questions, which might have perplexed the converts, had been disposed of in the writings of the Apostles, we cannot reasonably expect to find amongst its literature that class (so large in our own) of didactic spiritual instruction, of which sermons form the grand staple. This defect, as some may think it, arose from the very superiority of the character both of writers and readers. The enemy was then the world in arms, who is indeed readily discerned, provokes resistance, and compels a decision of character. All that was required, therefore, was a short and pithy harangue, such as a general would give before the onset of a battle (and every day was a day of battle with them) ; and we cannot wonder that but a few of this class, delivered under less ordinary circumstances, such as letters to churches, should have been preserved. But the enemy of later days has been the world in arts, which insidiously allures, and perplexes the resolution, by its designing mixture of good and bad. So far from soldiers in the field, we are rather the people in assembly ; among whom the devices rather than the armies of the enemy are present. We require, therefore, the long and studied address of the orator. Hence it was

that Chrysostom spoke to "citizens," and not to "soldiers¹;" and in detailing to them the wiles of the enemy, captivated his hearers with an eloquence which, to say the least, would have been deemed superfluous by their hardy predecessors. Not that such compositions do not require higher powers and a deeper knowledge than those artless bursts. It requires little foresight to warn us against the pointed sword. But it is the office of deep skill to detect the drugged bowl.

We might have presumed, at first sight, upon the nature of the great bulk of Christian literature of this period. Knowing the enemy that is to be encountered, we readily conceive the weapons with which he is to be attacked, and the ground on which he is to be met. The heathen and the heretic were the outward and inward adversaries of the Church. The mind of the former was to be disabused of superstition and prejudice; of the latter to be freed from the corruptions which he had introduced from philosophy. For these purposes it was necessary to expose the absurdities of heathen mythology, and to enter upon the ground of Greek philosophy. Hence arises what appears to a person who does not throw himself into the situation of the writers, an elaborate display of heathen accomplishments. Whether they may not have been sometimes too ambitiously put forward, is a question which we should be slow to decide, ignorant as we must be of the particular call of the occasion. But nothing can be more presumptuous than the cry of want of spi-

¹ Tacit. Annal. i. 42.

rituality, which has been sometimes raised against these venerable defenders of the faith. They endeavoured to meet the occasion, and had no time to talk of that which was justly taken for granted in every professor of the Gospel in those days. Those are easy times for the Church, when men have but to look to their own minds, to pour forth their own pure meditations, and not to consider the minds of others, and adapt their language with continual and careful foresight to the avenues through which it has to pass into them, and there do most effectually the work of God.

He that would attack an enemy with effect, must carry the war into his country. This did the Fathers; and their accusers have only to address, in behalf of the Gospel, a clever Brahmin as he ought to be addressed—and certainly never has yet been addressed—and they will quickly find out the injustice of their accusation. What is spirituality to him who is presumed in the outset not to have the Spirit? His heart and head must be cleansed of the filth of his own religion, before they are suitable to entertain the words and workings of the Holy Ghost. The grand and general controversy of the Catholic Church, of our times, has been against infidelity; and such a topic gives great advantage to our divinity, which must thus necessarily have a more spiritual cast. There is no system to be encountered; being an objector, and not a projector, the enemy has no country, as it were, which is to be invaded. Our champion, therefore, remains upon his own spiritual ground, and never loses sight of its altars and churches. The infidel is a sort of elusive, incorporeal

combatant, that may be kept away, but cannot be laid fast hold of. His weapons are negatives, and his refutation is to be effected by exposing not so much his positive as his relative absurdity; that is, by vindicating and displaying the truth and beauty of the Gospel. It would be strange, therefore, if modern controversy were not of a more spiritual cast than ancient. But only let us suppose (what may happen) the Gospel, now so happily introduced into India, to be incorporated into some part of their mythological or philosophical system, and thus to pass, among the multitudes that would know no better, for Christianity. Would it not be the obvious duty of the Church there to expose the adulteration precisely in the same way as the Fathers exposed the Gnostics sixteen hundred years ago? Let us hear no more, then, of such accusations, nor listen to men who find it much more easy and agreeable to look down with an air of fancied superiority, and vent crude, uncharitable criticism from a distance, than to grapple with facts hand to hand.

Their interpretation of the text of Scripture has been freely found fault with in the preceding pages. But in excuse, we ought to remember that their defect arose from their very advantage. Traditional instruction being still full, incorrupt, and authentic, they were not so continually remanded to Scripture as we are, who have discarded the corrupt system which pretended to be derived from that original. Although, therefore, Scripture was always the arbiter of the last appeal, it was not found necessary to canvass it with that exact diligence which is now requisite. Nor indeed were the literary habits of

their minds, or any minds of their day, so critical as ours. Having adopted from the Hellenists a wrong principle of interpretation, they were led away by their ignorance of Hebrew to give it still further scope. The Septuagint is often unintelligible : they could not refer to the original, and thus were often driven for sense to an allegorical interpretation. Under these circumstances, we cannot wonder, that, in the heat of controversy, they forced this instrument, which seemed so flexible, into their service when it was not on their side, and weakened their cause by pressing an unwilling auxiliary. But as to us it is the sole fountain of doctrine, as we have been inured to critical habits, ever since the revival of true learning has made it necessary to sift and sort the promiscuous heap which has come down to us, we diligently seek to extract its one and true meaning. We go up to the original language, and carefully thrashing out the grain, winnow away all chaff of human fancy. Every expression is searched for all that it can yield ; and we, therefore, do not flatter ourselves with having more than it will yield. For such a temper, which is not of our own forming, but of God's, who formed our times, we should be humbly thankful, and at the same time reverentially bear in mind the advantage of the Fathers, by which our superiority in this respect is counterbalanced.

The doctrine of the Fathers has been most violently assailed from two opposite quarters ; by such as endeavour, by throwing a slur upon antiquity, to refer every thing to the authority of the modern Church of Rome ; and by such Protestants as wish by the same means to find an excuse for their want

of some of the fundamental rites and discipline, and occasionally even doctrine. Some impugnors think that they have done the work at once, by attacking them with a sweeping charge of heathen prejudices still lurking in their minds. Now, to say nothing of the fact, the truth or falsehood of which may perhaps be gathered by the reader of the preceding pages, presumption at first sight is against such an hypothesis. Considering the extreme grossness of heathenism, we could not but conclude, even before we read their works, that the violence of such a reaction must have driven them completely beyond every particle of its influence ; and that they must have been very different from their successors of later centuries, who, born in the arms of the Gospel, clad their Church from the wardrobe of expired paganism. On this point we need only repeat the caution, to bear in mind the different terms in which an article of doctrine will be expressed by men of precisely the same opinion, before and after its discussion by a searching controversy. Their language on the Eucharist is a good specimen of the laxity of language with which men will deliver their thoughts when they are in no fear of being misunderstood, and how they can perplex both parties after a controversy has arisen.

II. The period in which they lived was unfavourable to good writing. Originality of thought and depth of feeling had vanished before the helpless indolence of indiscriminate reading, and the selfishness of luxurious indulgence. Verbose declamation had taken the place of vigorous sense, and tawdry phraseology of inventive imagination. The selfish

lack of patriotism which caused men to neglect all monuments of antiquity, contributed to the corruption of the tongue which they had received from their forefathers. The Greek had been the language of luxurious slaves for 400 years, and the Latin for 200, when Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian of Carthage, asserted in those distant colonies the freedom of the Gospel of Christ. Could we expect them to write in any other than the language and even style of the day? Or that, writing on subjects for which the language in its purity had never found expressions, they should write with greater purity than their contemporaries? Making allowance for necessary innovation of language, they are equal in style to the authors of the day, and in vigour of thought incomparably superior. What a glorious contrast, indeed, do they afford to the spirit of their age! What a healthy freshness of mind is infused by the regenerating grace of the Gospel! It was in this divine service that our own language grew up to that power and strength which it has attained, and the Fathers of our Church fashioned it to the hands of our poets and orators. Its employment in the same service still alone preserves our literature from the very lowest debasement. The Gospel sends us to the search of our own hearts and minds, and to the contemplation of the might and mercy of God. Thus we draw from the fresh and deep fountain of all wisdom, and vigorous exercise is given to the noblest of our faculties. As long as such a fountain is used, the influence of its waters will be felt even in the remotest departments of our literature, and will preserve them from utter barrenness.

•

Where we have found such a spirit, we might well excuse the outward dress (were it even more faulty) to which the constraint of their times compelled the writers. We do not undervalue the spirit of the assertors of our civil and religious liberties against the tyranny of James, because they were clad in the hideously-tasteless dress of the fashion of their day. Often indeed the very hurry of style affects us more deeply than the most studied composition could have done. Such neglect, instead of reminding us (as in a profane author it would do) of the indolent reveller, oppressed perhaps with yesterday's enjoyment, suggests the martyr or confessor, who seeing the sword ready to descend upon his neck, seized the few moments of the breathing-time from preaching and persecution, to extend his instruction beyond his personal range. His figure comes vividly before us, and we thankfully admire. Direct notices sometimes occur, and announce to us, in the midst of calm discussion, that the furnace of persecution was then fiery hot, and we look in and see these good and holy men, walking spiritually loose and unburied in the midst of the fire, and among them is a form like the Son of God¹, in whom is their trust. Can we read on without feeling, can we refuse our affection, or deny our confidence to these men? Every line they penned was a dying declaration, from which they were liable to be called, with the single intervention of the governor's tribunal, to the judgment-seat of Christ. How can the opinions of such men be lightly weighed, how shall the style of such

¹ Daniel iii. 25.

men be unfeelingly criticised? It would be well, indeed, for very many modern writers on divine subjects if they were able to assign any thing like such sufficient reasons for hurried composition.

III. The moral code of the Fathers may seem so ascetic, as even to wage war against our nature, treating the body as an inveterate enemy, instead of tutoring it as a wayward child. We have seen the strictness to which it was carried by Clement and Tertullian, and how the tendency of their notions upon chastity goes to the annihilation of mankind. The former, however, expressly forbids in other passages such a conclusion, and the latter thought that the end of the world was approaching. On this point we must again carefully put ourselves into their situation, and from that survey the aspect of their times. They were deeply corrupt, and the corruption was much more contagious and fatal than even the same degree of it would be now, from its intimate connexion with heathen superstition. An immoral Christian was not only a sinner against the God whom he served, but became an apostate, and served other gods. There was no parlying with such an enemy. It was necessary to cut off all communication with him. Thus his duty would leave the careful Christian to a greater strictness than may be thought necessary, or even proper, in more favourable times. The only safe way of keeping a rule is to remain considerably within its boundary, so as to have room to spare and time to recover, when the spiritual assailant is endeavouring to push us beyond it. And even artificial distinctions are of importance in a state of society wherein things,

otherwise indifferent, assume a positive character. For example, the wreath of flowers, worn upon the head, is not only a harmless, but also a natural¹ and beautiful ornament. Yet were it in our days the constant concomitant of impure and profane revelry, would any woman of decent character venture to wear it? Again, with regard to the abstinence which they recommend from marriage, we should remember how much less pure was that state then than it is amongst us. In the eastern parts particularly (and there these rules were drawn with the greatest strictness), the domestic comfort of marriage was but imperfectly understood, and the wife was (as she still is) in a situation little better than that of a licensed mistress. Hence marriage was likely to be a stumbling-block in those days of persecution, not only from the hold which the world gained on the heart's good affections, but also from the carnal and unprepared state in which it kept the parties. The times demanded continual and vigorous exercise against a conflict which was ever at hand. When the struggle of torture and hunger and the prison was awaiting them every hour, it was not prudent for the spiritual wrestler to wax fat and grow proud of flesh, but to be prepared against the grapple of his adversary, by watchfulness and fasting and hardness of living. "He should have no flesh about him (says Tertullian) to supply matter for torture,—his skin should be shrivelled and dry, to serve him as a coat of mail, and armed with horn

¹ This Tertullian and Clement deny. But they had better have remained content with the solid reasons derived from its profane use.

against the claws of the beasts. He should already have disposed of all blood, as of the baggage of the soul in haste upon her journey, in which she has already arrived at death's door, through the process of fasting¹."

That these and the other precepts of morality should be so much more frequently inculcated, and much longer insisted upon, than statements of doctrine, in the writings of the Fathers, can only surprise or scandalise such as cannot enter into the peculiarity of their times. In a well-taught Christian community (and in their days it was most carefully taught, and formed a striking contrast to every Church and congregation of our own days, even where no pains have been spared) general addresses, presupposing full doctrinal instruction, will insist chiefly on its practical application. Such is the matter of the epistles of Clement, and Ignatius, and even (excepting that to the Galatians) of the shorter letters of Paul himself, which he addressed to Churches confirmed by his own labours in the truth. But other writings, as those of Clement, were intended to be read not only by the fully-instructed, but also by the catechumens, and even by the heathen. We need not repeat the reasons of their great caution against very explicit statement of doctrine in such a case. Let, however, any one imagine himself for a moment to be living in a highly-civilized heathen country, of which he, with his fellow-Christians, forms not the tenth part. Let him suppose any Christian doctrine to be divulged to the general ear, only to be met with

¹ Tertull. de Jej. 12.

misrepresentation, ridicule, and vilifying reproach, the greater in proportion to its awfulness. Let him also suppose more private and more effectual means of teaching these doctrines. On entering fully into the case, and much farther than we can now follow it, he would doubtless approve of the policy of men who were so sincere as to be ready at any moment to answer the call of laying down their lives for their Lord's name's sake.

On concluding this review, it seems not right to withhold some awful reflections, which must intrude themselves into the mind ever as it turns to examine the early ages of the Gospel. We cannot but acknowledge, that the stage of society in which we are moving is precisely the same with that in which the world, revelling in all the pride and luxury of refined civilization, persecuted the heralds of truth and messengers of salvation, in which the Fathers preached, and wrote, and suffered. Nor can all its splendour of inventions for the enjoyment of life hide from the eye, which is wise enough and honest enough to look steadily at an unwelcome truth, both its moral and intellectual degeneracy. From this our position, then, we can view the examples of that period with exceeding interest ; and a brief comparison with them on the several points just discussed will not be unprofitable.

I. The effect of Christian controversy, in any case whatever, is to lower the tone of spirituality, since it drives men to the resources, and even shifts, of merely human reason, and excites the passions which it is their duty to subdue. To the absence of this, on any grand scale, for some years past, may be at-

tributed the much more spiritual turn which our theology has lately taken. But at the same time has not such a profound peace lulled us into too much security, and made us forget our old weapons, and neglect to maintain our magazines? Are we not becoming too little attentive to externals, which, although they cannot bear a moment's comparison with the least of the internals, are nevertheless as necessary as our body, in this life, is to our soul? What more intrinsically vile than the cup, through which is administered the communion of the Lord's blood? and yet without it can be no administration. But a vital controversy is at hand, which will compel us, for our very existence, to remember that we are still in the flesh, and will remind us of the importance of externals. If Israel, in his highest pitch of peace and prosperity under Solomon, could maintain it only by being in constant readiness for war; so has it ever been with spiritual Israel, and so will it ever be. His land is surrounded by enemies who are eager to take advantage of the least relaxation from vigour, of careless security about the line of boundary, and of inattention to what lies beyond it. We shall soon be driven, if we will not have voluntary recourse, for example and authority, to those writings which it has been too much the fashion to undervalue. As long as the Church of Rome is in existence, no Church that differs from her is safe, without the armour of the knowledge of the Fathers. If one think to put herself out of all reach and all chance of grapple, by having recourse to mere spirituals and abstract speculation, she will only experience the fate of the Church of Geneva, and the old

Puritanic congregations of this country, which have, like a dry sponge, sucked in all the gross materialism of Socinus.

II. The writings of the Fathers have been generally treated with little ceremony as compositions. Are the writings of this day superior? Do we not see in every department of our literature the same symptoms of decline as marked that of their days? Nay, see we not worse? There is, in our general periodical literature, a rapidly debasing cause at work, which was unknown in their days. Before this, all accuracy and depth of knowledge, all anxiety for truth, all good taste, all manly judgment, all purity of language, is fast giving way. Such qualities cannot generally exist in writings which are to be read to-day and to be forgotten to-morrow. Can any sacred compositions of this day be compared with those of the Fathers? Where is the vigour of mind and deep erudition of Clement and Tertullian? What passages shall we compare with the noble strains which they breathe? Where shall we find that rich variety of matter which they contain? The best proof of their superiority is the fact that our best divinity has been derived from them. The most vigorous, the most beautiful, the most copious of our writers, they that have been models to posterity, are they also who drank deepest from this source. Nor will this brilliant school be revived in the Church, before its sons resort to the same fountain.

III. The theory of morals can scarcely be better understood now than it was in those days when Aristotle was read by the readers of Scripture; and assuredly we shall not have the vanity to contend

with them in the practice. If they erred, they erred on the safe side of strictness. Thus at all events they were prepared against the perilous assaults of sudden trials. Their constant self-denial secured them against the denial of Christ. The straitest among us appear almost as wine-bibbers and gluttons in comparison ; and no one acquainted with antiquity will deem it a harsh saying, to assert that many who denied Christ under the trials of those days may have persevered to the end as the most faithful of saints in ours, at least as far as ours have yet gone. Are we quite equal to them as they are ? Their characteristic is not violence, but insidiousness of temptation, not momentary, but gradual assault. The assailant and the point of assault is comparatively undefined ; and thus, that which it is the business of all our senses and faculties to watch against, comes to be thought the business of none. Let any one compare the biography of a good and well-known character of our own days with that of one of the times of the Fathers ; and he will perceive how great is the difference. There is a want of strength, a vagueness of character, in the modern, which we do not discern in the ancient. The former is like the modern Greek pictures of saints, which are destitute of the relief afforded by light and shade ; while the latter resembles a picture of one of the Italian schools, set out in all the strength and variety of harmonious colouring. We, in fact, cannot fully understand either ourselves or our neighbours, as did those early Christians. The countenance of the magistrate, and approbation of the people, which they had not, hide much from our view. Under such circumstances,

not only charity, but deep humility also, should inspire us in judging of those our predecessors. From them, too, our forefathers of the West received the Gospel: they were the builders of the ark in which we have been saved. Shall we deride them, if we catch them in a momentary nakedness?

The derision which all antiquity is now undergoing will excuse this vindication of the Fathers, even should it have been made at the expense of our own relative merits. It is wiser at all events to be too lowly than too confident. But it may be safely asserted, that our theology will never be in a sound and healthy state, the foundations of the Church will never be distinctly ascertained, and the building kept in proper order, the very documents of our faith will never be beyond the reach of dispute, as long as a general neglect of their writings shall prevail.

" Vos exemplaria Græca
Nocturnâ versate manu, versate diurnâ ¹,"

is advice much more necessary to be followed by the accomplished divine than by the correct poet. May the pressing call of these days thus to vindicate the truth against error, arouse many a generous student to the examination of these models; and while the Lord affords him the leisure, may he consecrate it to this His so necessary service. The obligation particularly falls upon those to whom their education has imparted a familiarity with the learned languages. In that they have received a talent,

¹ You let the models of old Greece invite,
Their page to turn by day, to turn by night.

which, if not thus employed, can scarcely be properly employed, and if thus employed shall be increased tenfold. There is no study (considering it even as one among the many studies) which so fully repays the student. The mind, set to work by so pure a spirit, rises aloft, and drops at every rise some fettering incumbrance, and it immediately pursues its object, as the dove, let loose into the sky, immediately plunges towards the quarter of its home. The Master whom he is serving is the fountain of all wisdom, the comforter of all uneasiness; and will not He enlighten the understanding of His servant, quicken and deepen his faculties, cheer his despondency, confirm his irresolution, assuage his fretfulness, disperse his perplexity, and relieve all the infirmities attendant upon study? Verily, his lamp shall not be dull, who is inquiring through the lamp of the Spirit; and his book shall not be read in vain, who shall seek in it the ministry to the truth of the book of the word of life.

THE END.

INDEX.

- Adam condemned by the Gnostics, 176
 Ælia, 377
 Alexandria, effect of its locality on its writers, 290; on its missionary efforts, 291
 Allegorists, 314
 Amphitheatre, description of, 68; the common source of persecution, *ib.* 85, 331; visited by lax Christians, 346
 Angels, fallen, 237; ministry of good, 322
 Anicetus, 207
 Animalists, 340, 345
 Antioch, described, 53; ruined by earthquake, 70
 Antiquity, Christian, importance of its study, 200, 406
 Antoninus, M. Aurel., his character, and hostility to Christianity, 150, 227
 Apology, meaning of the term, 143; various writers of, *ib.* 153; effect of, 140, 333; character of those of Justin, 143; of Tatian, 170, 181; of Tertullian, 336; that of Apollonius, 280
 Apostolic men. Their peculiar position, 15, 74, 78; privilege of their immediate successors, 213
 Aristides, the Apologist, 143; the Sophist, 92, 227
 Asceticism, evil effects of, 98, 345, 356; adopted by the Gnostics, 104, 176
 Asclepiades, 301, 375, 376
 Atonement nullified by the Gnostics, 104; the doctrine not to be abruptly revealed to the heathen, 219, 320
 Augustine, 327
 Babylas, 386
 Bacchanalia, 131
 Baptism, when and by whom commonly administered, 365; sponsors required, *ib.*; its accompanying rites, *ib.*; thought necessary to salvation, *ib.*; connected with regeneration, 322, 364
 Barchochebas, 131
 Bardesanes, 181
 Basilides, 102
 Bishops to be necessarily adhered to, 63; their wide inspection, 189, 245
 Blastus, 244
 Cappadocians, character of, 372
 Carpocrates, 182
 Cerdo, 100, 102
 Christ, a twofold, held by the Gnostics, 103; twofold advent of, 149; his appearance to the patriarchs, *ib.*
 Christians, early character of, 9, 136; trials of, 30; calumnies against, 131, 142, 143; nature of their charity, 79
 Chrysostom, 70, 251
 Church, decline of its purity, 323, 347, 349, 350
 — of Alexandria, 292; its catechetical school, 293
 — of Amastris, 193, 259
 — of Antioch, 378
 — of Antioch, founded by Peter and Paul, and mother

- of all the Gentile Churches, 53; elects Asclepiades Bishop, 301. 375
- Church of Athens, 192. 288
- of Cappadocia, 371
- of Carthage, 326. 335
- of Corinth, founded by Peter and Paul, 22. 118; its schisms, 25; healed by Clement's letter, 29; its bishops, 185; its poverty relieved from Rome, 186; its subsequent orthodoxy, 206
- of Gortyna and Gnosus, 194
- of Jerusalem, persecuted, 37; vexed by heresy, 39; removed to Pella, 43; re-settled, 47; obscurity of its history, 203; elects Alexander Bishop, 377
- of Lacedæmon, 192
- of Lyons and Viennæ, 224
- of Nicomedia, 193
- of Philippi, 66; written to by Polycarp, 76
- of Phrygia and Asia, 266. 341
- of Rome, founded by Peter and Paul, 22. 188; its perilous position under the Cæsars, 20; persecuted by Domitian, 21; its letter through Clement to the Church of Corinth, 28; vexed by the Gnostics, 78. 113. 140; its liberality, 186. 199. 230. 256; a centre of Christian tradition, 230; barren in divines until the Reformation, 244. 251; causes of its influence, 256; its indulgence, 339
- of Sinope, 97
- of Smyrna, 72; persecuted, 85
- Civilization, extent of, under Roman empire, 112; decline of, 118
- Controversial works, why of such short-lived interest, 239. 362
- Councils, first appearance of, 259
- Crescens, 154
- Cynics revived, 154
- Cyprian, 327
- Dæmons, 171
- Decius, 385
- Demetrius, 300. 379. 380
- Demiurge, 103. 175
- Diatessaron, 179
- Docetæ, 56
- East turned to in prayer, 323
- Eclectic philosophy, 311
- Election, doctrine of, 322
- Encratitæ, 176
- Eucharist, how and when celebrated, 366; doctrine concerning it, *ib.*
- Fabianus, 386
- Fasts, days of, 322. 366
- Fathers, requisites for their study, 5; allowances to be made for them, 145; defence of, 395, &c.; incompetent to dispute with the Jews, 148. 150
- Female sex restored to its rank by the Gospel, 171; tyrannical treatment of by Tertullian, 350; its fashions, *ibid.*; its Christian duties, 351
- Festival days, 366
- Florinus, 215. 243
- Fortunatus, 23
- Galatia, colonized from Gaul, 221; fruitful in heresy, 340
- Gaul Christianised, 221; character of the people, 235
- Gnostics (heretics), 56; their spirit, 94; their system, 100; its component elements, 109; its wide diffusion, 113. 180. 235
- Gnostic (or perfect Christian) described, 307; defects of such a picture, 315
- Greece, spiritual regeneration of, 191; character of its people, 251; decline of its language, 319
- Heathenism, decay of, 19. 332; view of, in the writings of the Fathers, 137, 138; impurities

- of, 166; light allowed to it by the Fathers, 159. 310; proper mode of attacking it, 317. 396
- Heraclâs, 299
- Heresy, its bad effects on the mind, 116; its scandal to new converts, 141; spirit predisposing to it, 172; its dishonesty, 189. 196; some of its sects enumerated, 211
- Hydoparastatæ, 176
- Hyginus, 99
- Hystaspes, 310
- Intermediate state maintained by the Fathers, 322. 365
- James, Bishop of Jerusalem, 38. 203
- Jerusalem destroyed, 43; rebuilt, 48. 202; library founded at, 382
- Jude, grandsons of, 203
- Justification through faith, 159. 236. 322
- Leonidas, 296
- Lyons described, 224; persecution at 227. 233
- Marcus, an impure Gnostic, 182. 235
- Marriage, condemned by the Gnostics, 104. 176; discouraged by some of the orthodox, 193; and why, 403
- Martyrdom, exaggerated notions of its merits, 352. 365; their dubious nature, 352; not to be voluntarily incurred, 297
- Maximilla, 340
- Melito, 261
- Millennium, maintained by Justin, 149; by Irenæus, 237; by Tertullian, 365
- Miracles spoken of as extant in the second century, 213
- Missions, modern, defects of, 317. qualifications required in the missionary, 219. 321
- Monachism, 354
- Montanists, 266. 340. 351. 352. 355
- Narcissus, 259. 376. 378
- Origen, 294. 299. 300. 372. 379
- Original sin, 364. 379. 386
- Pædagogus, proper sense of, 312
- Palma, 193. 259
- Pantænus, 289. 292. 293. 372
- Papias, 201. 237
- Papirius, 261
- Paraclete, 340. 345. 346
- Paschal Controversy, 81. 245. 259
- Pella, 43
- Pepysa, 340
- Perennis, 279
- Persecution under Nero, 18; Domitian, 20. 58; Trajan, 49. 59; Antoninus Pius, 142; M. Aurelius, 84. 153. 227; Severus, 296. 335. 374; Decius, 365; under provincial governors, 335
- Philip of Gortyna, 193
- Philo, 304
- Philosophy, bad character of its professors, 166; its evil effects, 126; its worthless spirit, 132; its principal schools, 128. 310; the eclectic, 311; was the principal source of Gnosticism, 101; how it was adapted to their purpose by the Fathers, 158. 314
- Phrygia, fruitful in heresy, 180. 340
- Pilgrimages, good and evil effects of, 369. 370
- Pius I. 100
- Platonism, not introduced into the Church by Justin, 158; its language adopted by the Fathers, 305; and why, 314
- Polycrates, 261
- Pontus described, 95
- Pothinus, 222. 233
- Praxeas, 266. 353
- Prayer, when and how made, 322; for the dead, 366
- Primus, 185. 206
- Prisca or Priscilla, 340
- Prophecy, rejected by the Gnostics, 104; misapplication of, 367

- Protreptic of Clement, 311
 Psychics, 340
 Pythagoreans revived, 129

 Quadratus the apologist, 143.
 281; the Bishop of Athens,
 192

 Regeneration in baptism, 322.
 364
 Resurrection, denied by the
 Gnostics, 104
 Romans, their character, 251.
 283. 358; character of their
 language, 358; slow conver-
 sion of their senate, 283
 Rusticus, 155.

 Sagaris, 261
 Saturnalia, 349
 School, Catechetical, at Smyrna,
 83; at Rome, 140. 170; at
 Alexandria, 293
 Scripture, different grounds of
 its authenticity to the early
 Christian and to us, 55. 78;
 its stumbling-blocks to the
 educated heathen, 135. 167;
 requires the knowledge of the
 original tongue for its right
 understanding, 147, 148; its
 striking character to the hea-
 then reader, 167; to the Jew-
 ish, 208; its sufficiency for the
 proof of all doctrine main-
 tained by Irenæus, 237; by
 Clement, 322; its allegorical
 interpretation, 303. 398; its
 hidden sense, 305. 308; was
 read at meals and at bed-time,
 323
 Severus, 296. 335. 374
 Serapion, 375
 Sibyl, 310
 Simon Magus, 140
 Slavery, evil effects of, felt by
 Christians, 278
 Smyrna described, 72; ruined
 by earthquake, 91
 Socrates, his death and Justin's
 compared, 157. 170
 Soter, 186
 Stoics, 128; especially hostile
 to Christianity, 151
 Stromateis, 312
 Student, disadvantages incident
 to, 298

 Tertullianists, 344
 Theoctistus, 379. 381
 Theodotus, 265
 Theophilus of Cesarea, 259
 Thrasea, 261
 Trinity, 322. 364

 Valentinus, 102. 175. 231. 353

 Will, freedom of, insisted on by
 the early Fathers, and why
 so particularly, 159; by Jus-
 tin, *ib.*; by Tatian, 170; by
 Clement, 322; by Tertullian,
 364.

 ERRATA.

- Page 102, line 28, *for* Marcion, *read* Cerdo.
 — 251, line 30, *for* plausible, *read* flexible.

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